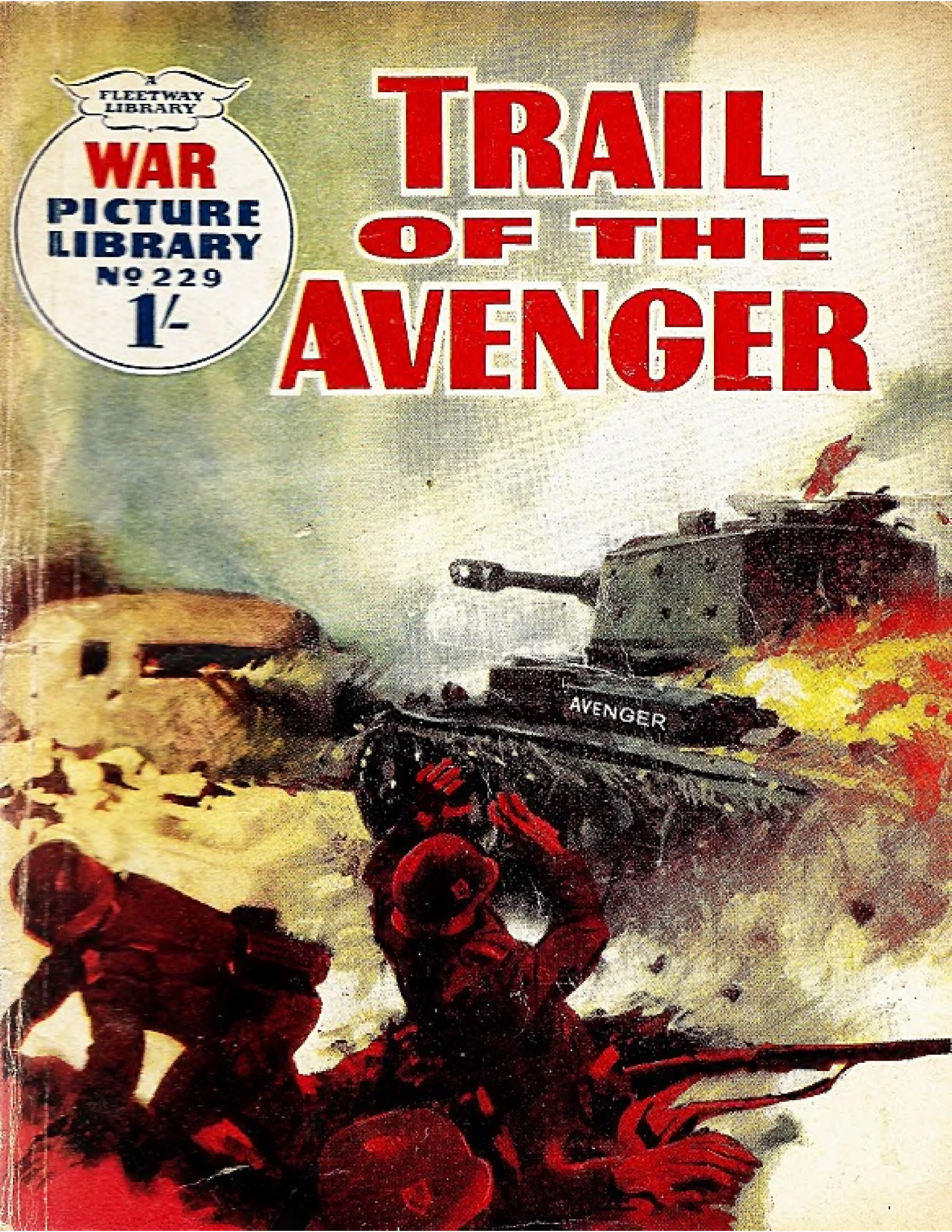
A FLEETWAY LIBRARY

WAR PICTURE LIBRARY

No 229

1/-

TRAIL OF THE AVENGER



4 ALL-ACTION ISSUES EVERY MONTH

★ No. 141 **THE BIG DROP**
There was no greater glory than being a paratrooper.

★ No. 142 **VIPER'S NEST**
If the information is vital — the price that must be paid is high.

★ No. 143 **SENTENCE DEFERRED**
They carried their guilt with them into the thick of battle.

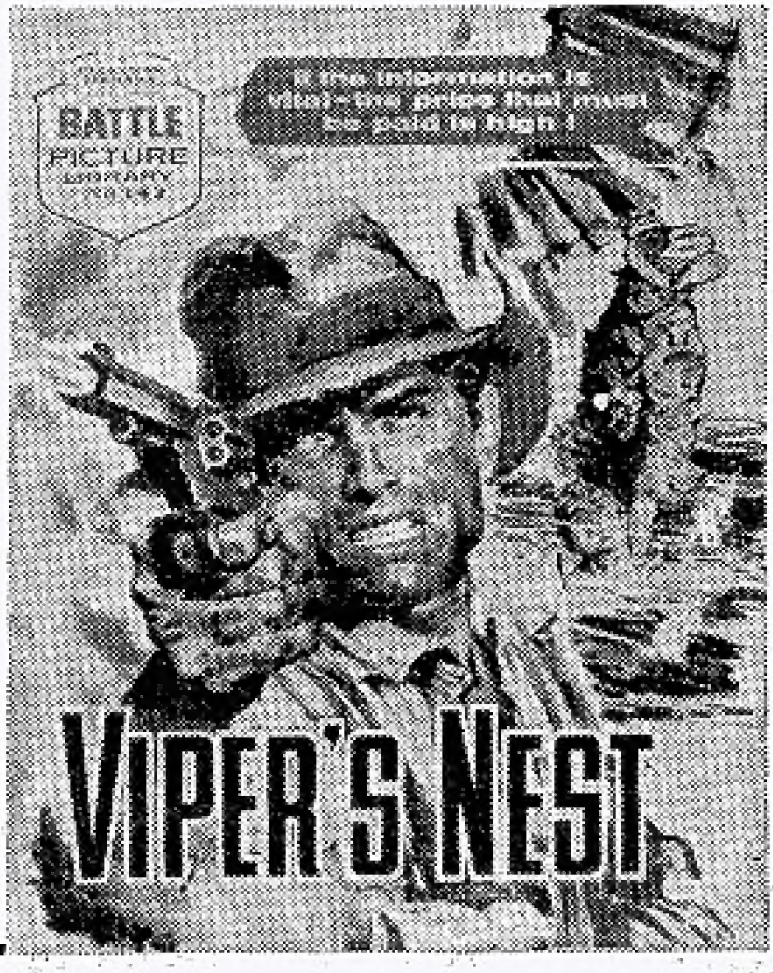
★ No. 144 **THE RULE OF TYRANNY**
His father's blood flowed in the veins of the enemy they taught him to kill.

BATTLE PICTURE LIBRARY

On Sale

Monday 17th Feb.

MAKE SURE
Order your copies NOW!



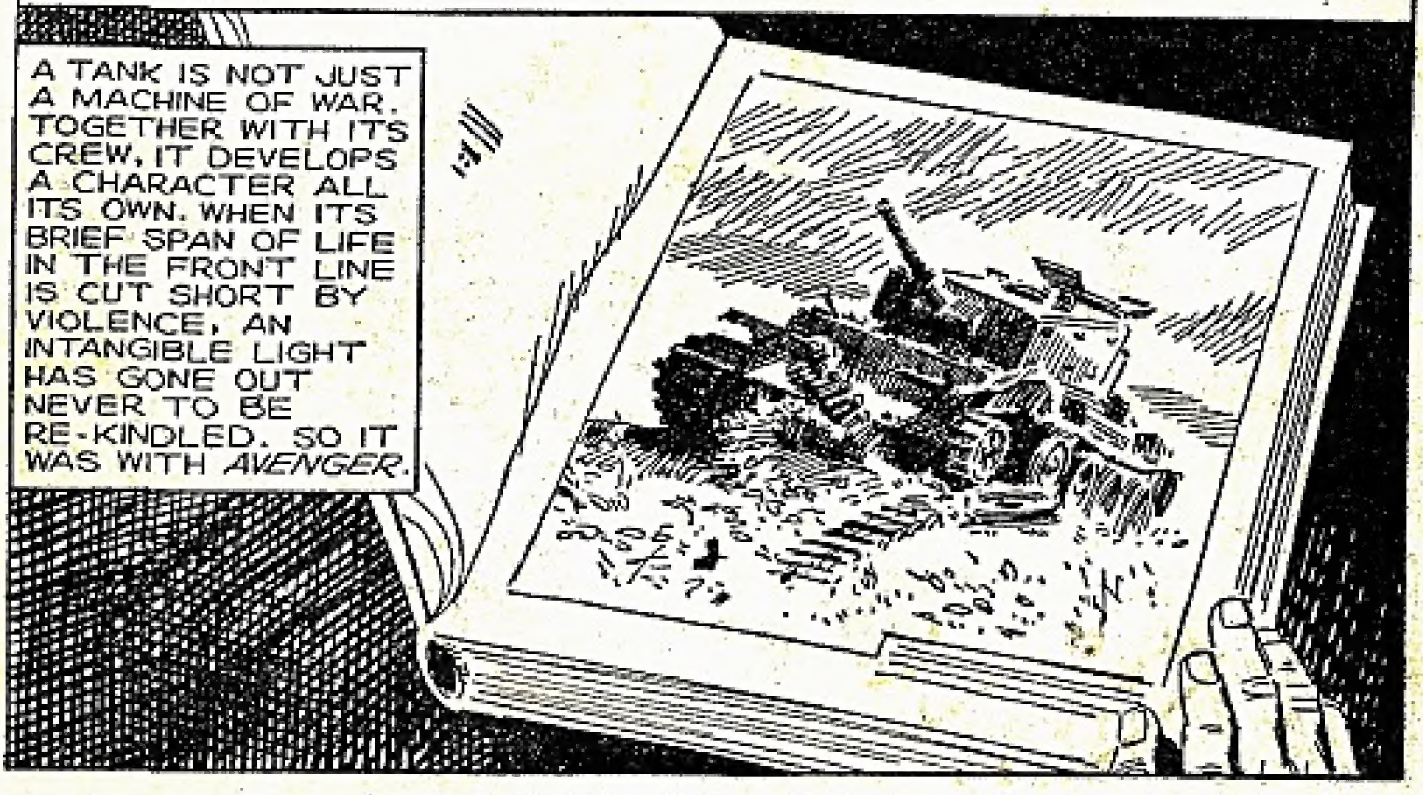
TRAIL of the AVENGER

© Fleetway Publications Ltd., 1964

IN LIBRARIES AND MUSEUMS THERE ARE MANY TRIBUTES TO GALLANT REGIMENTS. THIS IS THE STORY OF ONE THAT WAS UNIQUE FOR IT WAS NOT COUCHED IN THE USUAL DULL WORDS OF HISTORY, BUT WAS A STORY TOLD IN STIRRING PICTURES.

Chapter 1. Battle Plain

A TANK IS NOT JUST A MACHINE OF WAR. TOGETHER WITH ITS CREW, IT DEVELOPS A CHARACTER ALL ITS OWN. WHEN ITS BRIEF SPAN OF LIFE IN THE FRONT LINE IS CUT SHORT BY VIOLENCE, AN INTANGIBLE LIGHT HAS GONE OUT NEVER TO BE RE-KINDLED. SO IT WAS WITH *AVENGER*.



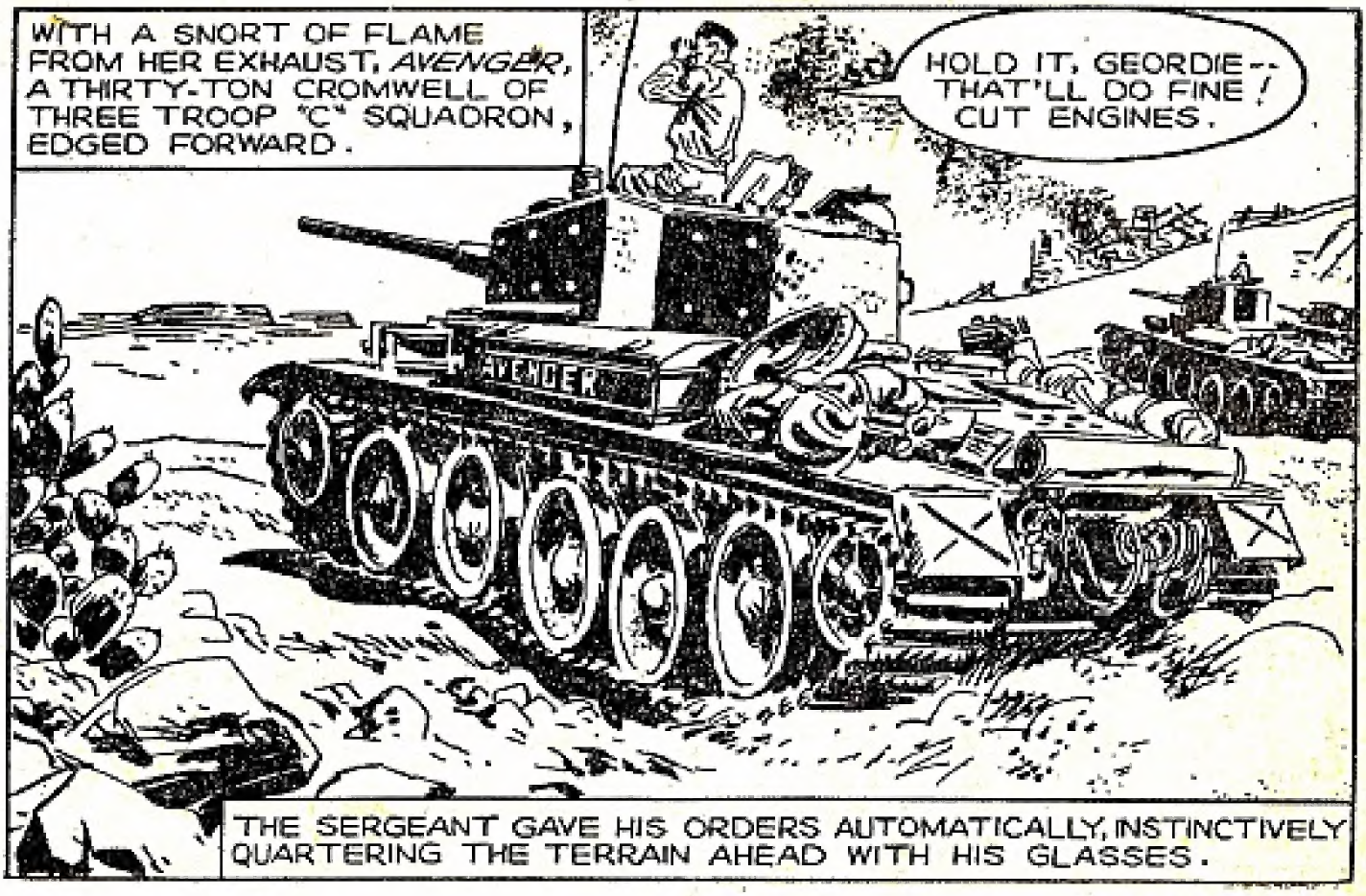
FOR THREE DAYS, THE HUSSARS HAD BEEN IN THE VANGUARD OF THE ALLIED ADVANCE IN SICILY.

CUNNING DEVILS! THAT PLAIN COULD BECOME A KILLING ZONE TOMORROW.

THEY WON'T HAVE IT ALL THEIR OWN WAY. THE R.A.F. ARE GOING IN AT 0-FOUR-HUNDRED, THEN THE ARTILLERY ARE LAYING ON A STONK WITH LONG TOM.

LET'S FACE IT, GENTLEMEN, THERE'S NO CHOICE! WITH THE SEA ON THE RIGHT AND MOUNTAINS GUARDING OUR LEFT FLANK, THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY— *FORWARD!*

MEANWHILE, THE VANGUARD OF THE ALLIED ARMIES WAS DRAWING NEAR TO THAT SINISTER PLAIN OF CARENTERNO.
MAYBE IT'S EASIER FOR MEN LIKE BILL? SITTING THERE AS COOL AS A CUCUMBER. I WONDER IF HE'S EVER REALLY KNOWN THE TASTE OF FEAR?
OKAY, GEORDIE, ADVANCE! LEFT STICK A BIT. TAKE HER UP TO HULL DOWN ON THAT STOP BANK.


WITH A SNORT OF FLAME FROM HER EXHAUST, AVENGER, A THIRTY-TON CROMWELL OF THREE TROOP "C" SQUADRON, EDGED FORWARD.
HOLD IT, GEORDIE-- THAT'LL DO FINE! CUT ENGINES.
AVENGER
THE SERGEANT GAVE HIS ORDERS AUTOMATICALLY, INSTINCTIVELY QUARTERING THE TERRAIN AHEAD WITH HIS GLASSES.

DESPITE HIS APPARENT CALM, SERGEANT BILL DURRANT, M.M. AND BAR, WAS A WORRIED MAN.

TIME FOR A QUICK BREW UP IF WE LOOK SLIPPY, LADS. KEEP ON NET,. CLIVE.

THERE HAD BEEN PRECIOUS LITTLE SLEEPING IN THE LAST FORTY-EIGHT HOURS AND THE SERGEANT'S RED-RIMMED EYES THROBBED ABOMINABLY. THE CREW HAD STOOD UP WELL TO THE LAST GRUELLING THREE DAYS OF MARCH, BUT AS YET THEY WERE AN UNTRIED TEAM IN BATTLE.

THERE WAS LANCE CORPORAL CLIVE LORNE, THE WIRELESS OPERATOR. QUIET, CONSCIENTIOUS AT HIS JOB, HE WAS A GREENHORN, STRAIGHT OUT FROM THE U.K. YET HE MOVED WITH THE COOL DELIBERATION OF A VETERAN.

YOKE TWO ABLE. STRENGTH FIVE... OVER...

THERE WAS A BITTERNESS IN HIS EYES, TOO, THAT HAD NOT BEEN BORN IN ANY TRAINING UNIT.

THEN YOUNG STAN MITCHELL, THE GUNNER. LONDON BORN AND BRED, WITH A COCKNEY'S IRREPRESSIBLE CHEERFULNESS. HE WAS DESPERATELY PROUD OF HIS REPUTATION AS THE BEST SHOT EVER TURNED OUT FROM THE GUNNERY WING AT LULWORTH.

'ERE'S YOUR CHAR, SARGE! NO RUM RATION LEFT, SO I LACED IT WIV' GUN OIL.

GEORDIE STOKES, DRIVER MECH., THE ONLY OTHER DESERT RAT IN THE CREW. DEVOTED SLAVE TO THE UNGAINLY STEEL MONSTER THAT HE COULD TURN ON A SIXPENCE. BUT WITH AN ANGUISH ON HIS FACE THAT HAD BEEN BRANDED THERE EVER SINCE GAZALA.

IF BILL CATCHES YOU SKIVING AGAIN, TREV, HE'LL BANG YOU ON A FIZZER SO FAST YER FEET WON'T TOUCH! GET THAT BESA OILED UP. WE'RE GOING INTO ACTION!

FINALLY THERE WAS THE HULL GUNNER, JOHN TREVELLYAN. THE ARMY HAD TRIED HARD ENOUGH, BUT HE NEVER WOULD, PERHAPS HE NEVER COULD, BECOME A SOLDIER.

DRY UP, GEORDIE! EVEN IF I DID FIRE THE GUN I DON'T SUPPOSE I'D HIT ANYTHING. HOLD THAT EXPRESSION, IT'S JUST RIGHT.

Trail Of The Avenger

BILL DURRANT SNAPPED FROM HIS DAY DREAM AS HE REALISED THAT HE WAS BEING CALLED ON THE WIRELESS.

YOKE TWO ABLE... *I SAY AGAIN*... REPORT TO SHELLDRAKE ON THE DOUBLE. OUT!

HECK, WHAT'S GOT INTO ME THIS MORNING! I'M SLIPPING BADLY.

C.O. WANTS YOU PRONTO, SARN'T!

I'M NOT DEAF! STAY ON LISTENING WATCH!

AVENGER

159

THE OTHER TROOP AND TANK COMMANDERS WERE ALREADY GATHERED ROUND THE C.O.'s TANK AS BILL HURRIED UP TO JOIN THE CONFERENCE.

H-HOUR 0-FOUR-THIRTY. ABLE AND BAKER SQUADRONS WILL LEAD IN WITH TWO COMPANIES OF CANADIANS. CHARLIE AND DOG REMAIN IN RESERVE WITH THE JOCKS.

SUDDENLY BILL FELT SICK WITH RELIEF. HIS SQUADRON WOULD NOT BE THE FIRST TO CRAWL TOWARDS THOSE WAITING, HUNGRY GUNS.

AT THAT MOMENT, HE FINALLY FACED THE TORMENT THAT HAD BEEN GROWING INSIDE HIM EVER SINCE THE L.C.T. RAMPS HAD CRASHED DOWN ON THE SICILIAN BEACHES.

NEVER THOUGHT IT WOULD GET *ME* LIKE THIS! IT'S THE OTHERS, THEIR LIVES DEPENDING ON ME! I'VE GOT TO STAY ONE SECOND AHEAD OF THAT MUZZLE FLASH FOR US TO STAY ALIVE! I CAN'T, NOT ANY MORE!

HE KNEW WHAT HE MUST DO.

THERE WAS SOMETHING IN THE SERGEANT'S MANNER THAT MADE THE MAJOR LOOK UP SHARPLY.

WHAT IS IT, BILL?

I'VE HAD ENOUGH, SIR, I'M JACKING UP! IT WOULDN'T BE FAIR ON THE OTHERS IF I WENT ON.

THE MAJOR HAD KNOWN BILL A LONG TIME. HE LOOKED AT THE FADED RIBBONS ON THE SERGEANT'S TUNIC AND HE KNEW WHAT IT HAD COST TO UTTER THOSE WORDS.

NO SHAME IN THAT, BILL. YOU'VE DONE MORE THAN YOUR SHARE. I'LL GET YOU REPATRIATED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, THAT I PROMISE. RIGHT NOW WE CAN'T SPARE A TROOP LEADER OF YOUR EXPERIENCE. YOU'LL HAVE TO STICK IT OUT FOR THIS SHOW.

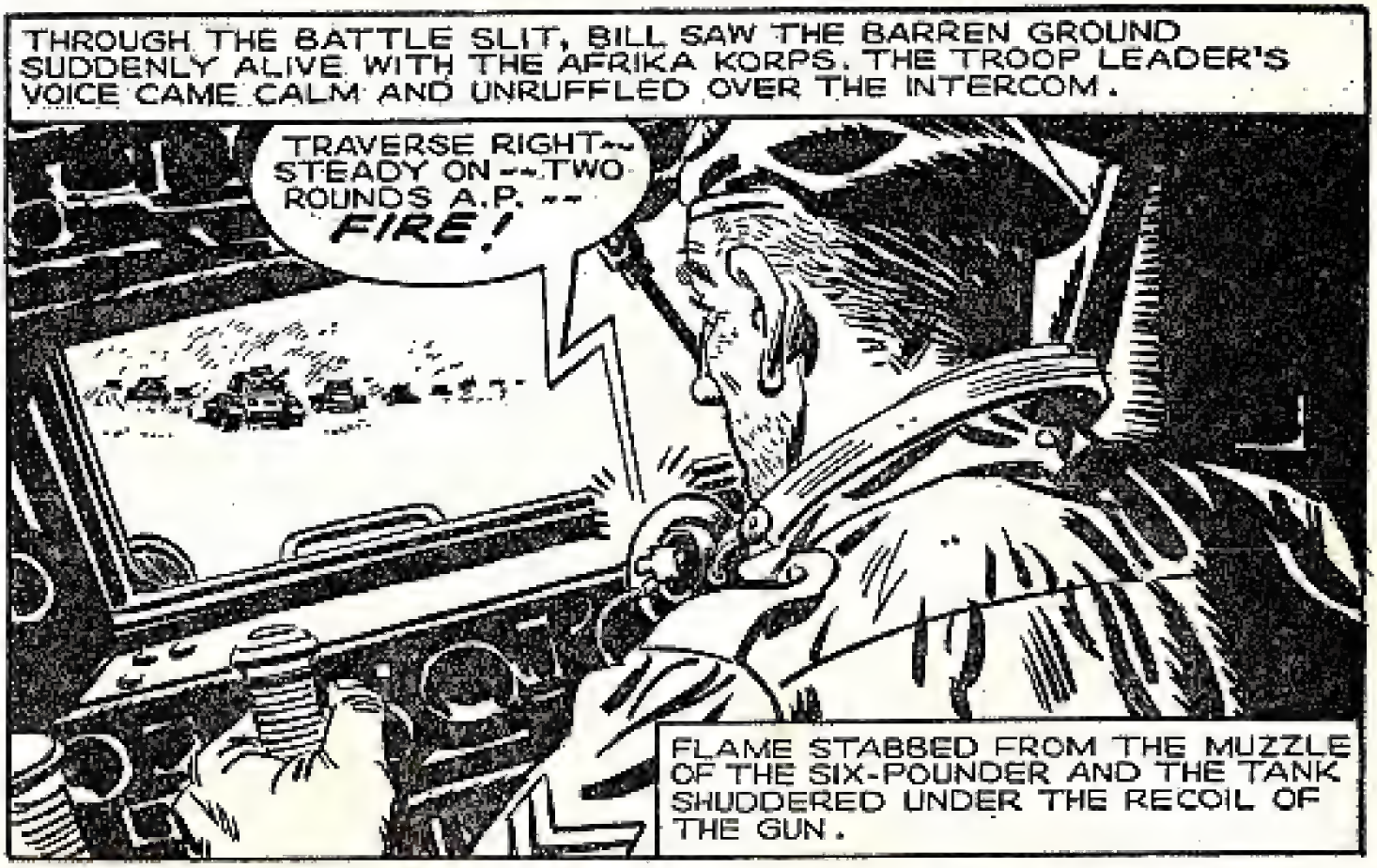
THANKS, SIR. I KNEW YOU'D UNDERSTAND.

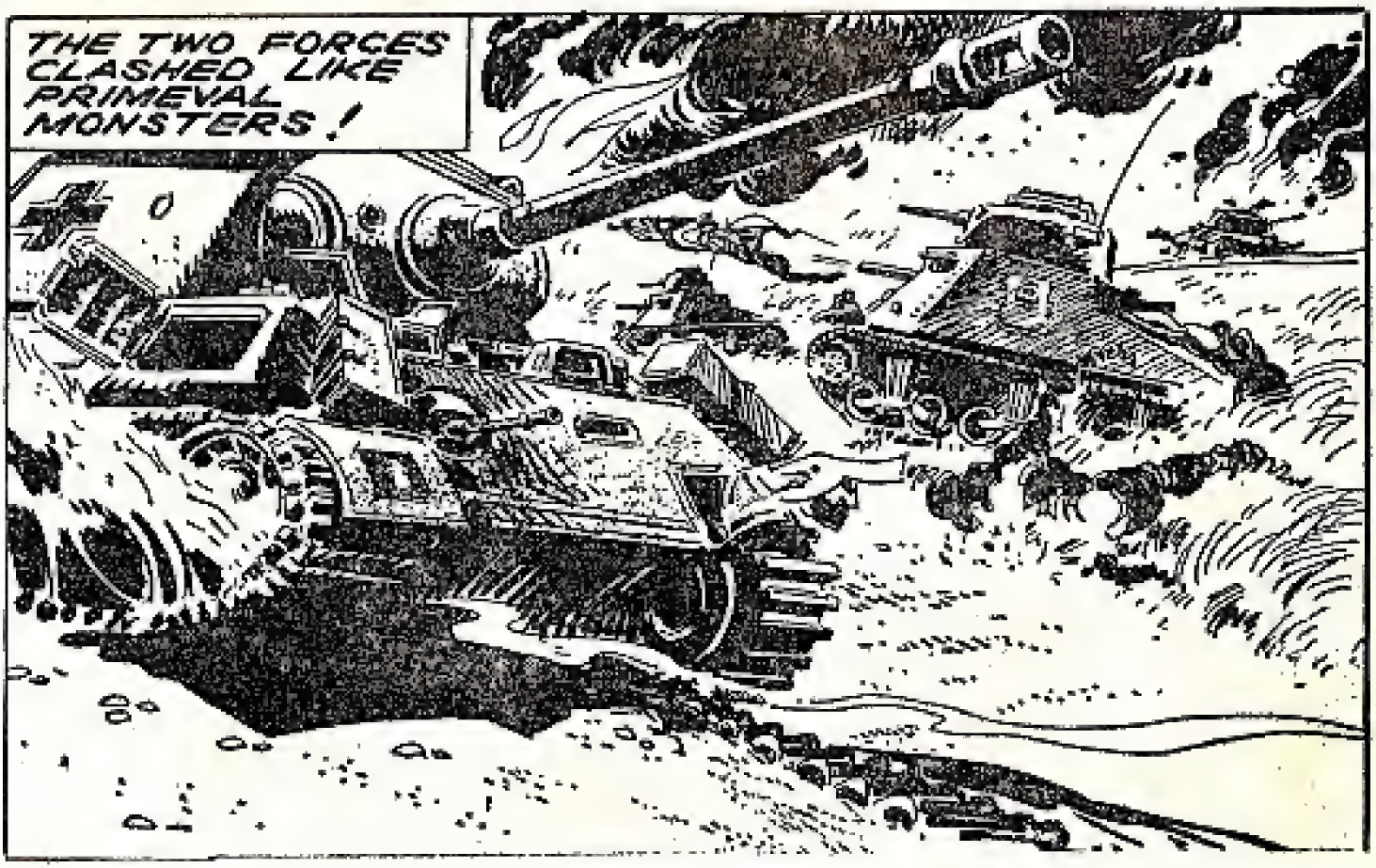
DURRANT WALKED SLOWLY BACK TO HIS TANK. HE WONDERED WHEN IT WAS HE HAD FIRST STARTED TO CRACK. HE HAD BEEN ALL RIGHT AT KNIGHTSBRIDGE. THAT WAS WHERE HE HAD WON THE BAR TO HIS M.M.

HE COULD STILL REMEMBER THAT BATTLE AS VIVIDLY AS IF IT WERE ONLY YESTERDAY, AND YET IT HAD BEEN A YEAR AGO ...

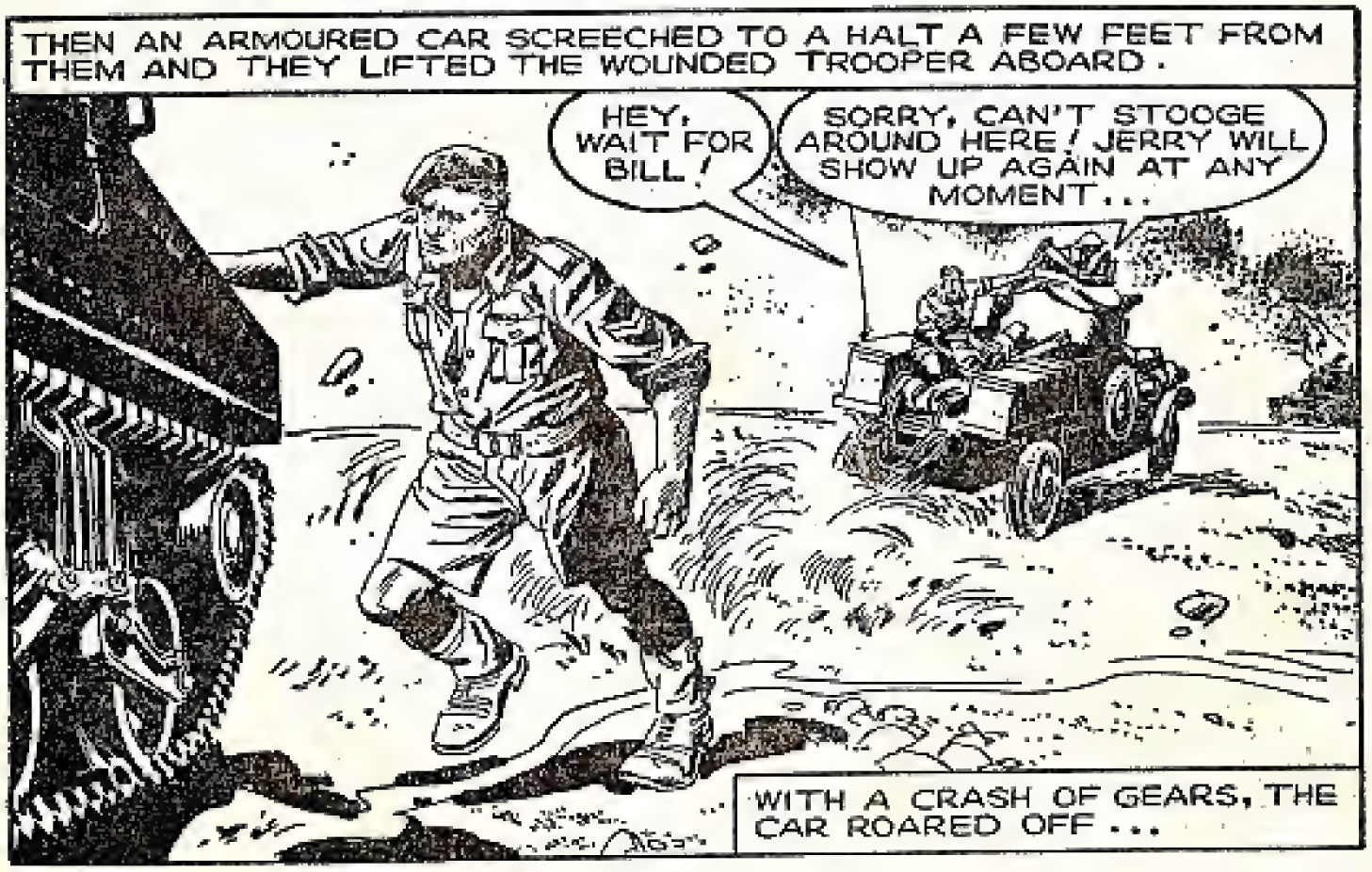
THE DEVIL'S CAULDRON THEY HAD CALLED IT. DURRANT HAD BEEN A CORPORAL THEN, DRIVER OF THE TROOP LEADER'S TANK.

ALL STATIONS FOX ONE. PANZERS TWO O'CLOCK ONE THOUSAND YARDS. ARROW HEAD FORMATION. STAND BY, SHOT ACTION -- FOX ONE, OVER.


THROUGH THE BATTLE SLIT, BILL SAW THE BARREN GROUND SUDDENLY ALIVE WITH THE AFRIKA KORPS. THE TROOP LEADER'S VOICE CAME CALM AND UNRUFFLED OVER THE INTERCOM.
TRAVERSE RIGHT~~ STEADY ON~~TWO ROUNDS A.P. ~~ FIRE!
FLAME STABBED FROM THE MUZZLE OF THE SIX-POUNDER AND THE TANK SHUDDERED UNDER THE RECOIL OF THE GUN.


THE TWO FORCES CLASHED LIKE PRIMEVAL MONSTERS!

Trail Of The Avenger



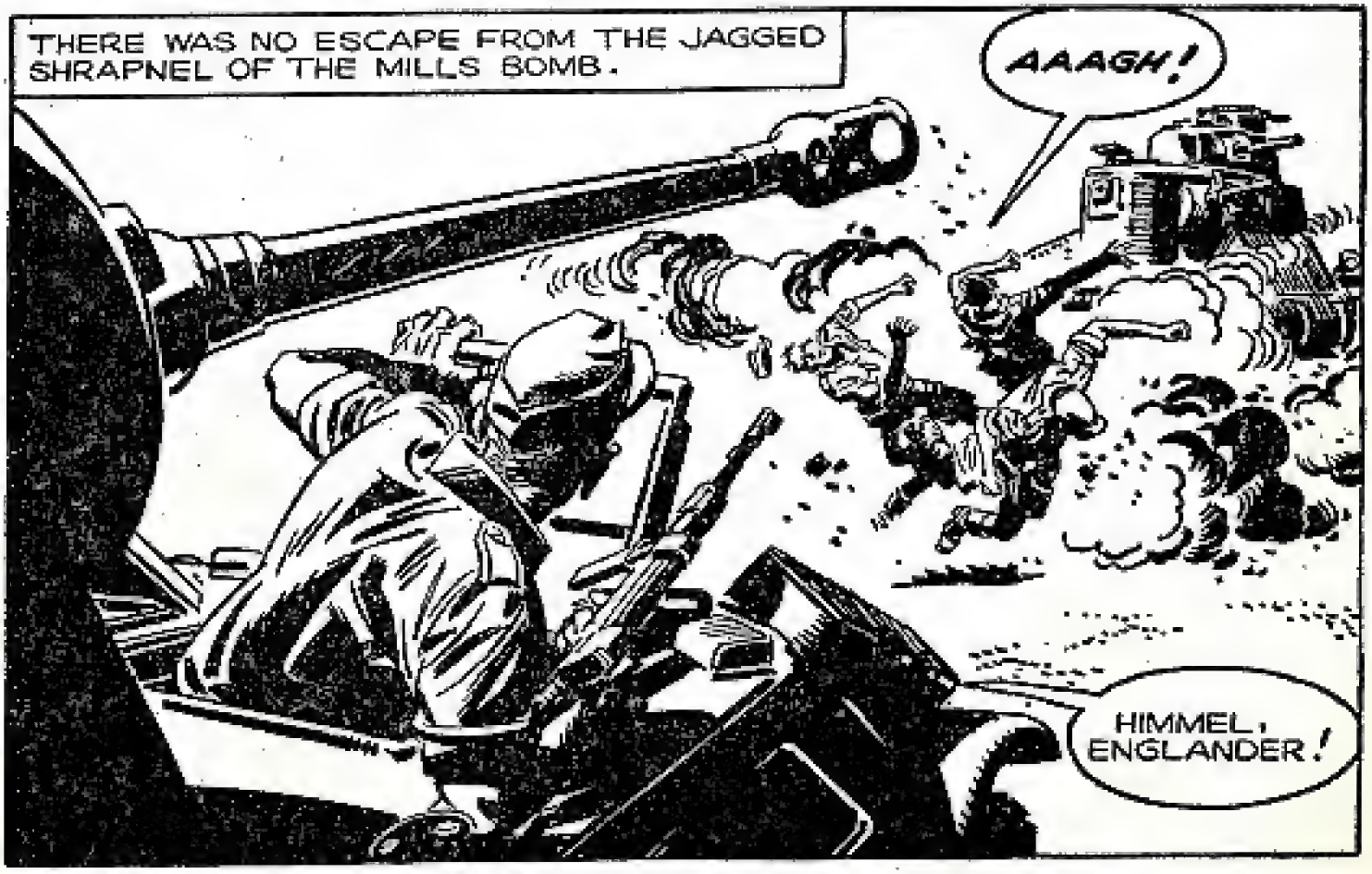
THE FIGHTING SEEMED TO HAVE EBBED AWAY SOMEWHERE TOWARDS THE WEST. BILL LEAPT BACK ON TO THE HULL OF THE CRIPPLED TANK AND LOWERED HIMSELF INTO THE TURRET.
GET OUT, MAN! THIS CRATE COULD BREW UP ANY TIME IF JERRY DECIDES TO HAVE ANOTHER CRACK AT US!
AND LEAVE YOU, NOT LIKELY! HANG ON, SIR, I'LL GIVE YOU A SHOT O' MORPHINE. THEN WE'LL GET YOUR LEG UNWOUND.

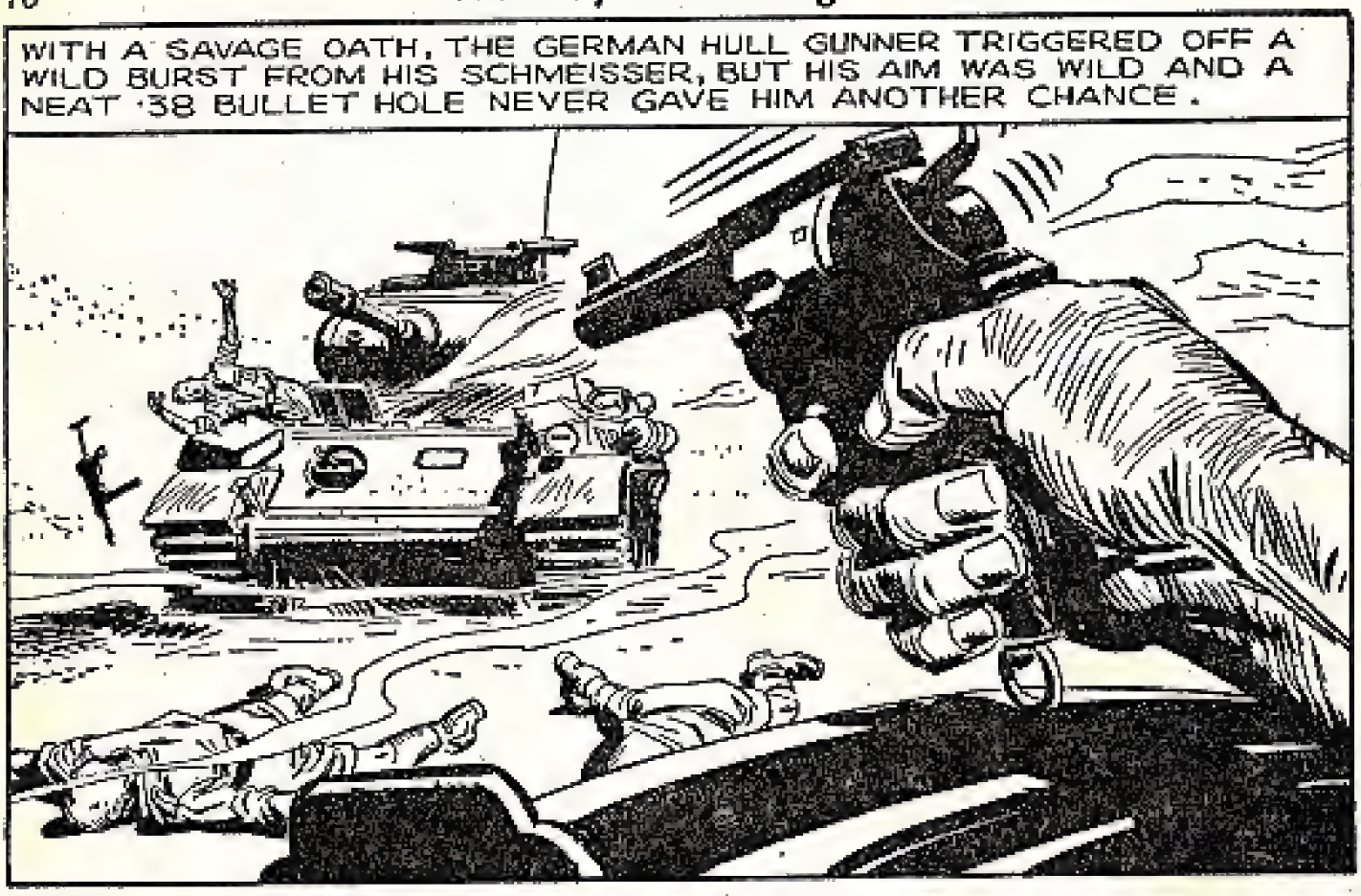
BUT DESPITE ALL BILL'S EFFORTS, THE TURRET TRAVERSING GEAR REMAINED JAMMED. THEN THEY HEARD THE OMINOUS GRINDING OF TRACKS.
NO DICE! THE DARNED THING WON'T BUDGE AN INCH.
LISTEN! THAT'S A JERRY COMING.

ACH! WE ARE IN LUCK! THERE MAY BE DOCUMENTS ABOARD. STEER LEFT, MULLER. WE WILL INVESTIGATE.
75

BILL AND THE LIEUTENANT WAITED TENSELY. THE MUFFLED ROAR OF THE ENGINES CEASED. BILL WIPED THE SWEAT FROM HIS EYES AND GENTLY EASED THE PIN FROM THE GRENADE.
DON'T FLUFF IT, BILL. YOU WON'T GET A SECOND CHANCE.
NOT TO WORRY, SIR. THIS'LL CREASE 'EM . . .

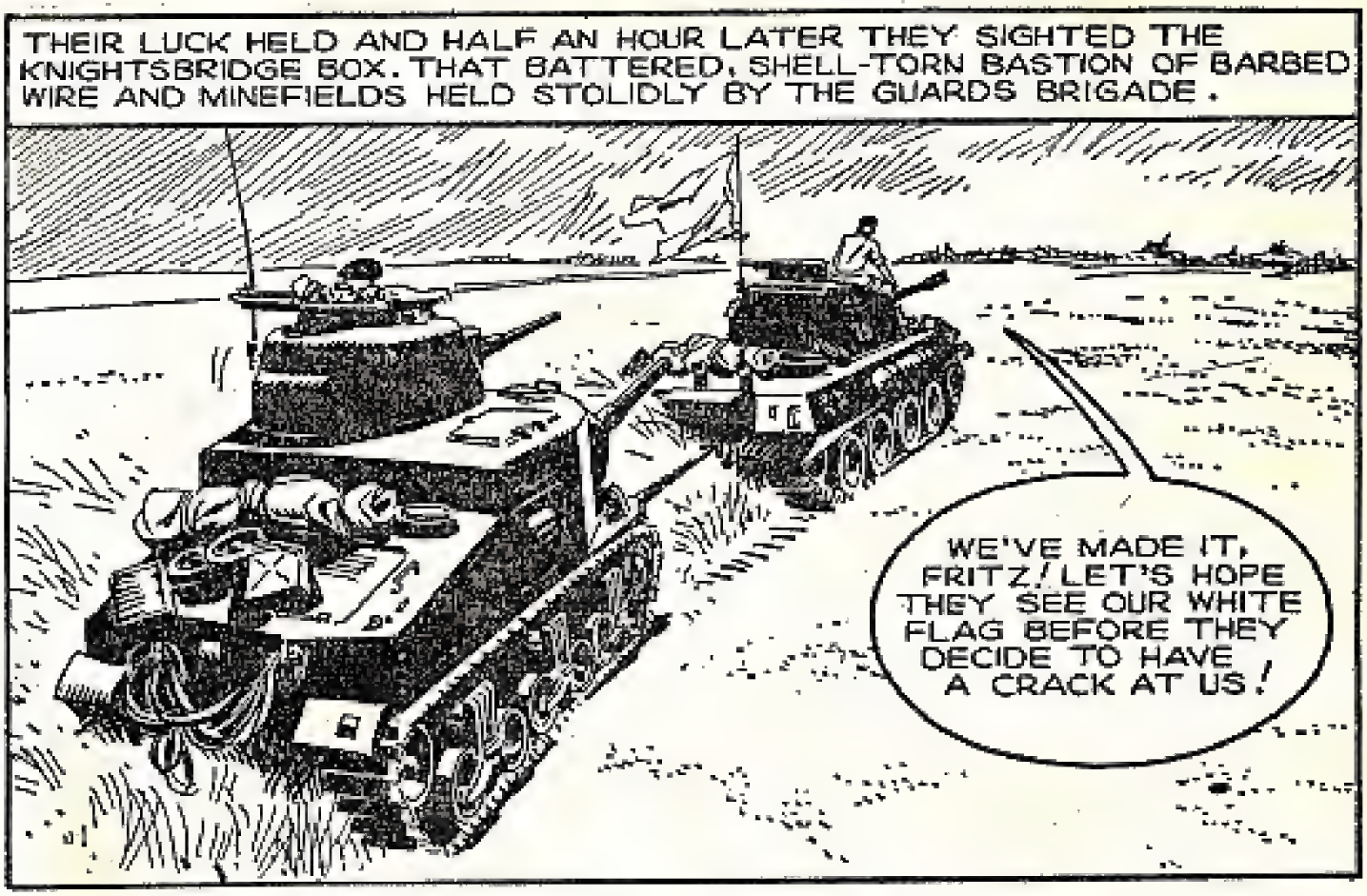
THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF THE WILD DISHEVELLED FIGURE TOOK THE NAZIS OFF GUARD ~~ AND THEN IT WAS TOO LATE!
SHARE THAT AMONG YOU!
GROSS TEUFEL!

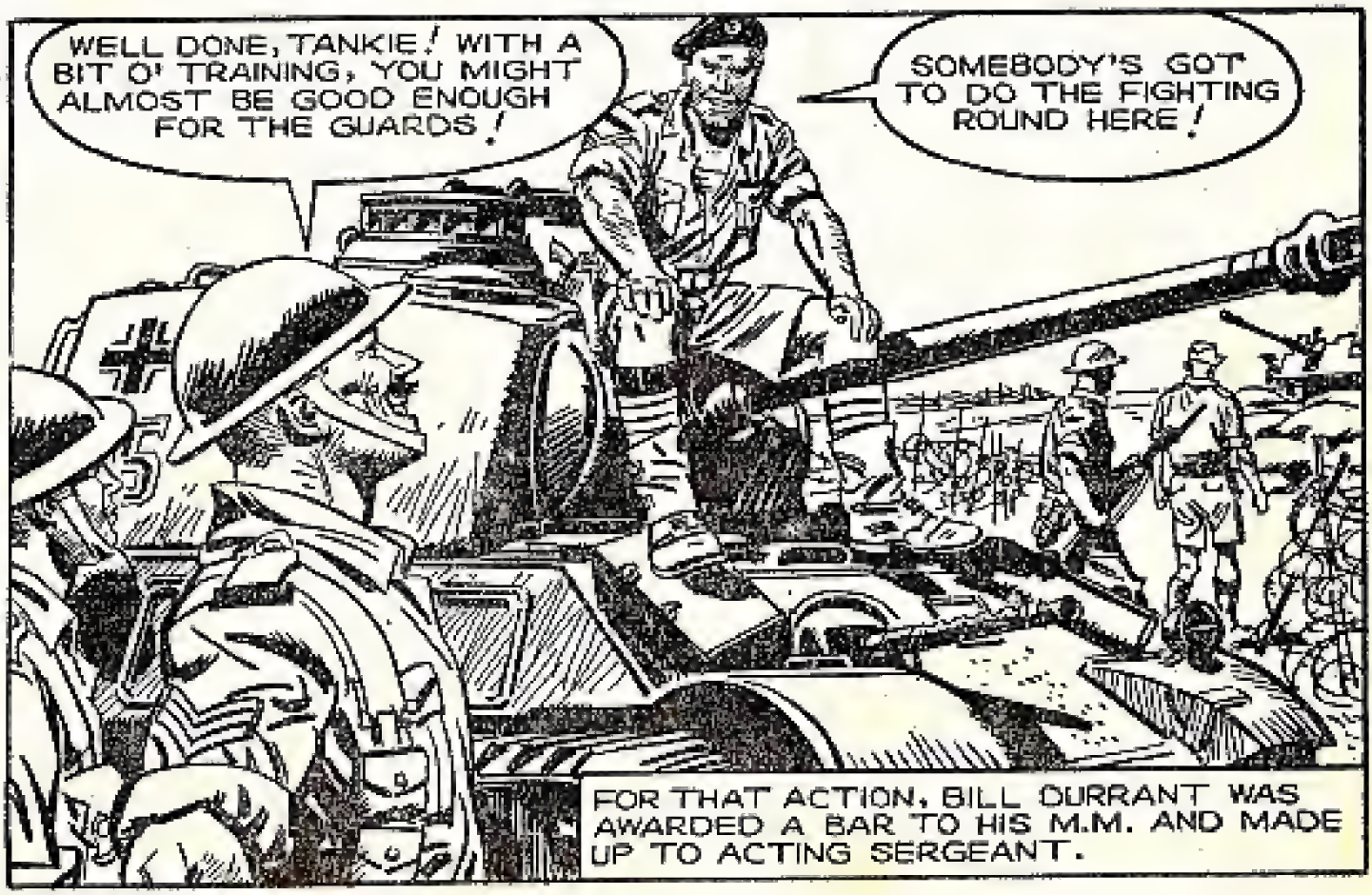

THERE WAS NO ESCAPE FROM THE JAGGED SHRAPNEL OF THE MILLS BOMB.
AAAGH!
HIMMEL, ENGLANDER!


WITH A SAVAGE OATH, THE GERMAN HULL GUNNER TRIGGERED OFF A WILD BURST FROM HIS SCHMEISSER, BUT HIS AIM WAS WILD AND A NEAT ·38 BULLET HOLE NEVER GAVE HIM ANOTHER CHANCE.

THE YOUNG GERMAN DRIVER HAD SEEN ENOUGH BLOOD SPILT. HE DID NOT WISH TO DIE FOR THE GLORY OF THE FATHERLAND.
NEIN, KAMERAD, NEIN! DO NOT SHOOT!
OKAY, FRITZ. HITCH YOUR BATTLE WAGON UP TO OUR TANK, AND JUMP TO IT!

UNDER THE COLD UNWINKING STARE OF THE CORPORAL'S PISTOL, THE GERMAN EAGERLY OBEYED ORDERS.
WILL YOU BE ALL RIGHT UP THERE, SIR? I'LL HAVE TO TRAVEL WITH THE JERRY HERE, JUST TO SEE HE DOESN'T TAKE THE WRONG TURNING.
I'M OKAY. KEEP BASHING, CORPORAL. YOU'RE DOING FINE!


THEIR LUCK HELD AND HALF AN HOUR LATER THEY SIGHTED THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE BOX. THAT BATTERED, SHELL-TORN BASTION OF BARBED WIRE AND MINEFIELDS HELD STOLIDLY BY THE GUARDS BRIGADE.
WE'VE MADE IT, FRITZ! LET'S HOPE THEY SEE OUR WHITE FLAG BEFORE THEY DECIDE TO HAVE A CRACK AT US!

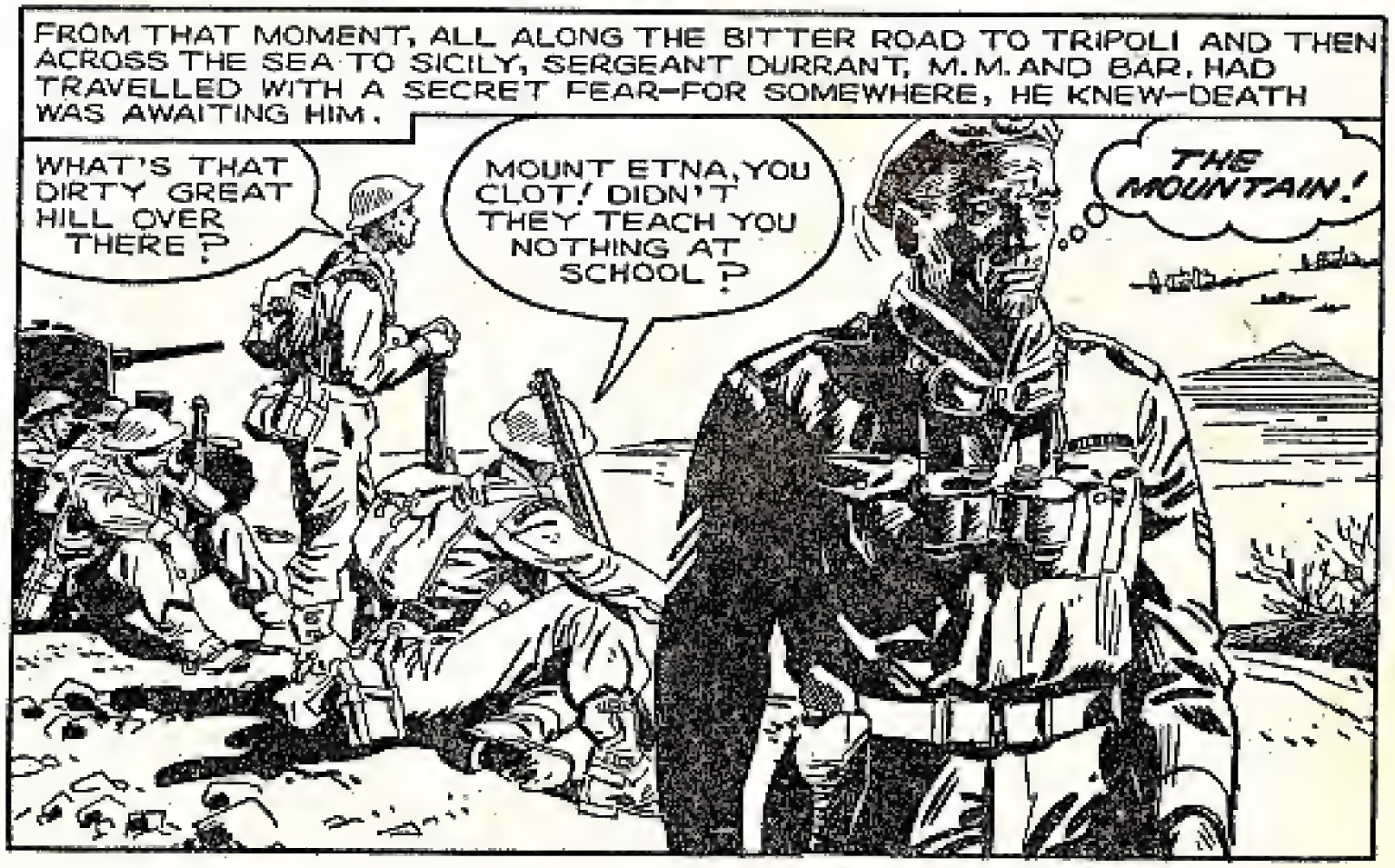

WELL DONE, TANKIE! WITH A BIT O' TRAINING, YOU MIGHT ALMOST BE GOOD ENOUGH FOR THE GUARDS!
SOMEBODY'S GOT TO DO THE FIGHTING ROUND HERE!
FOR THAT ACTION, BILL DURRANT WAS AWARDED A BAR TO HIS M.M. AND MADE UP TO ACTING SERGEANT.

WHEN BILL DURRANT REJOINED HIS REGIMENT, THE REFITTING FOR ACTIVE SERVICE HAD JUST BEEN COMPLETED. IT WAS THEIR LAST NIGHT IN LEAGUER BEFORE MOVING UP THE LINE...
GREETINGS, EFFENDI. CAN YOU SPARE WATER FOR AN OLD MAN?
CLEAR OFF, JOHNNIE. WE AIN'T...
NO. LET HIM HAVE SOME! WARM YOURSELF BY OUR FIRE. THE DESERT IS COLD AT NIGHT.

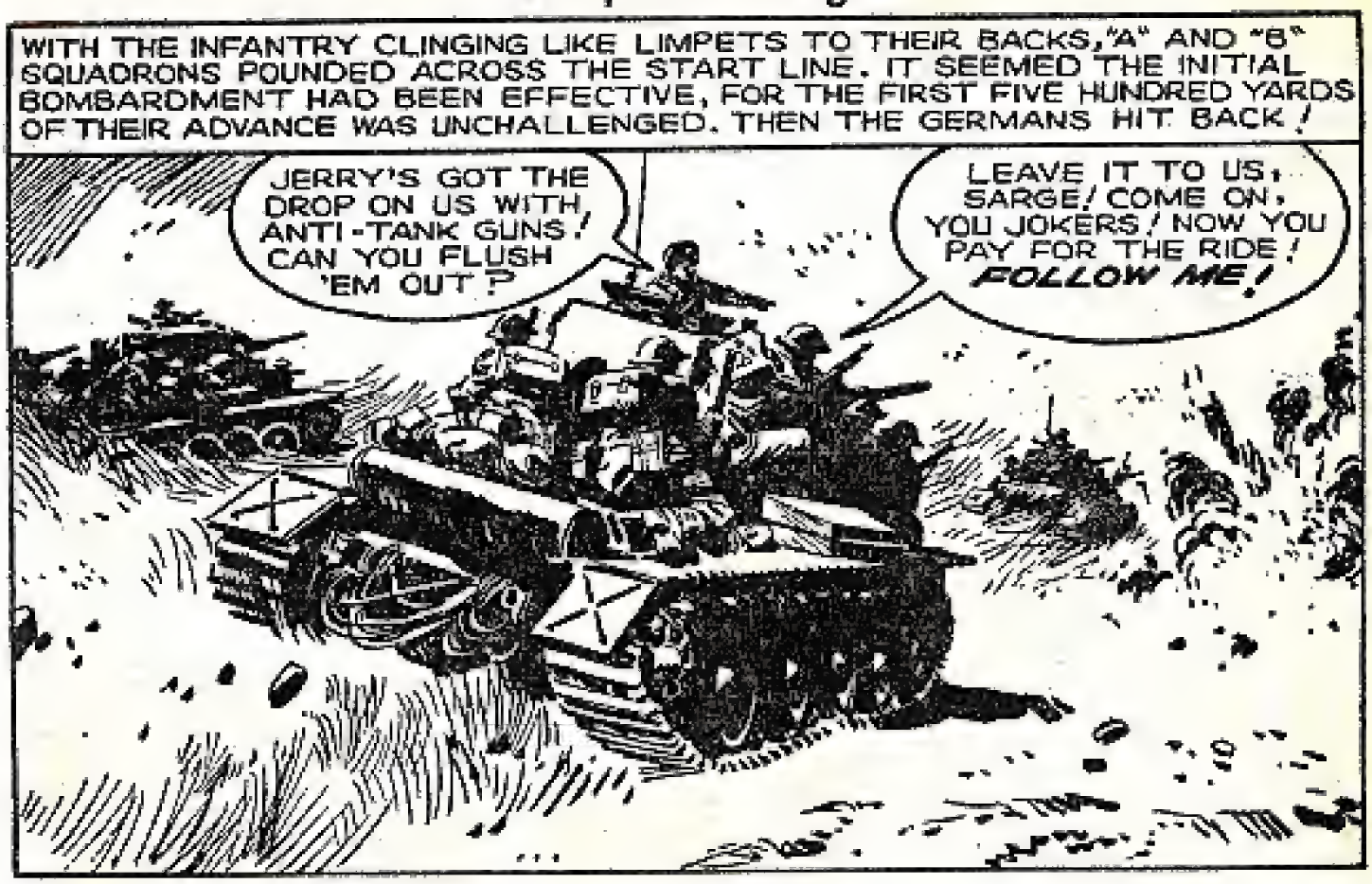
WITH A CALM DIGNITY THE OLD BEDOUIN JOINED THEM, WHILE A GROUSING TROOPER REPLENISHED HIS GOATSKIN BAG.
IS IT TRUE WHAT THEY SAY, THAT YOU NOMADIC PEOPLE CAN SEE INTO THE FUTURE?
THOSE WHO HAVE MADE THE PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA MAY SOMETIMES SEE WHAT IS DENIED TO THE EYES OF THE UNBELIEVER.

BUT THE ARAB SEEMED RELUCTANT TO SAY ANY MORE WHEN BILL DURRANT PRESSED HIM...
MY FUTURE! CAN YOU SEE THAT?
YES, I SEE IT. BUT SOMETIMES IT IS BETTER NOT TO QUESTION WHAT IS ALREADY WRITTEN. THE BLESSINGS OF ALLAH BE WITH YOU.

THE OLD MAN MOVED AWAY INTO THE DARKNESS OF THE DESERT BUT BILL HASTENED AFTER HIM.
YOU SAW SOMETHING ELSE. WHAT WAS IT? I MUST KNOW!
AS YOU WISH, MY SON. I SAW MUCH. A LONG JOURNEY--A MOUNTAIN--A TIGER--AND DEATH. SO IT IS WRITTEN.


FROM THAT MOMENT, ALL ALONG THE BITTER ROAD TO TRIPOLI AND THEN ACROSS THE SEA TO SICILY, SERGEANT DURRANT, M.M. AND BAR, HAD TRAVELLED WITH A SECRET FEAR—FOR SOMEWHERE, HE KNEW—DEATH WAS AWAITING HIM.
WHAT'S THAT DIRTY GREAT HILL OVER THERE?
MOUNT ETNA, YOU CLOT! DIDN'T THEY TEACH YOU NOTHING AT SCHOOL?
THE MOUNTAIN!

THE LANCASTER BOMBERS SAILED MAJESTICALLY OVERHEAD TOWARDS THEIR TARGET. THEN THEIR DEADLY CARGOES PLUMMETED EARTHWARDS AND THE SKYLINE ERUPTED WITH VOLCANIC ABRUPTNESS.
TRES BIEN! THEY ARE USING FRAGGING BOMBS!
WHAT ARE THEY, GAGNIER?
AIR BURSTS, KID. IT MEANS THERE'LL BE LESS KRAUTS LEFT TO WINKLE OUT!
OKAY, YOU CANUCKS, UP ON THE TANKS! WE'RE MOVING OUT, SOON AS THE HEAVIES OPEN UP.
AN OFFICER BARKED AN ORDER AND THE GROUND SHUDDERED AS BATTERY AFTER BATTERY OF FOUR-FIVES UNLEASHED THEIR FURY.
FIRE!
NUMBER ONE BATTERY, DOWN THREE HUNDRED! TEN ROUNDS SMOKE, FIRE!
YOU OKAY, SERGEANT? YOU LOOK AS THOUGH YOU'VE SEEN A GHOST.
I'M OKAY! MUST HAVE BEEN THAT CHAR YOUNG STAN DISHED UP.
YOKE ONE... YOKE TWO... ADVANCE!


WITH THE INFANTRY CLINGING LIKE LIMPETS TO THEIR BACKS, "A" AND "B" SQUADRONS POUNDED ACROSS THE START LINE. IT SEEMED THE INITIAL BOMBARDMENT HAD BEEN EFFECTIVE, FOR THE FIRST FIVE HUNDRED YARDS OF THEIR ADVANCE WAS UNCHALLENGED. THEN THE GERMANS HIT BACK!
JERRY'S GOT THE DROP ON US WITH ANTI-TANK GUNS! CAN YOU FLUSH 'EM OUT?
LEAVE IT TO US, SARGE! COME ON, YOU JOKERS! NOW YOU PAY FOR THE RIDE! FOLLOW ME!

GRIMLY THE CANADIANS DROPPED FROM THE TANKS AND FIXED BAYONETS. THIS WAS THE WAR THEY KNEW AND UNDERSTOOD. THE LONELY TRUDGE FORWARD INTO THE SMOKE, THE NERVE-RACKING YAMMERING OF MACHINE GUNS, THE LAST FURIOUS CHARGE.
KEEP GOING AND DON'T BUNCH! IF THE KRAUTS ARE THERE, WE DON'T WANT TO KEEP 'EM WAITING.
WE WON'T DISAPPOINT 'EM--WE NEVER HAVE YET!

THE NAZI LINES HAD TAKEN A WICKED POUNDING, BUT THE MASSIVE CONCRETE EMPLACEMENTS HAD SURVIVED AND THE GERMANS FOUGHT WITH THE TENACIOUS FEROCITY OF CORNERED RATS.
HIT THE DECK, MEN! THERE'S NOT A HOPE IN---AAAAGH!
WHERE ARE THE TANKS?
FOR PETE'S SAKE, GET THE TANKS UP HERE!
CANADA

IN ANSWER TO THE DESPERATE CALL FOR HELP, ABLE AND BAKER SQUADRONS LUMBERED FORWARD. THEN A WARNING CRY CAME FROM THE LEFT FLANK.

TIGERS! NINE O'CLOCK, TWO THOUSAND YARDS!

ALL STATIONS YOKE ONE AND TWO, ARROWHEAD LEFT! LOAD A.P.! PREPARE TO ENGAGE ENEMY...

FOR TEN TERRIBLE MINUTES, THE CANADIANS STUMBLED FORWARD ALONE INTO THE MUZZLES OF THE ENEMY GUNS. AT THE END OF THAT TIME, BOTH COMPANIES HAD CEASED TO EXIST.

AND THE RELIEF THAT SHOULD HAVE GONE TO THEIR AID, THE CROMWELLS, WERE STRIVING TO CLOSE INTO EFFECTIVE RANGE WITH THE MASSIVE GERMAN TIGERS.

ACH! WE WILL CRUSH THE PUNY ENGLANDER PANZER WAGONS LIKE INSECTS! TRAVERSE LEFT-- STEADY--ON--FEUER!

SERGEANT DURRANT'S STOMACH CONTRACTED INTO A HARD KNOT AS HE WATCHED THE MERCILESS SLAUGHTER ON THE PLAIN. THREE OF THE GERMAN TIGERS WERE BURNING, BUT AT THE COST OF MORE THAN HALF THE BRITISH FORCE.

THIS MUST BE IT! THE TIGER THE OLD MAN FORETOLD!

FOR THE BRIGADIER, A MOMENT OF AGONISING DECISION HAD ARRIVED FOR THE PLAIN WAS TO BE TAKEN--- WHATEVER THE COST.

YOUR RESERVE SQUADRONS WILL ADVANCE IN SUPPORT OF THE HIGHLANDERS, COLONEL. WE MUST BE THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PLAIN BY DUSK.

WE'LL MAKE IT, SIR. WITH YOUR PERMISSION, I'LL LEAD THE ATTACK MYSELF.

Chapter 2. Bale Out!

DURRANT SPOKE QUIETLY INTO THE HAND MIKE, SURPRISED THAT HIS VOICE REMAINED SO CALM FOR HE WAS QUITE SURE THAT THIS WAS WHERE HIS ROAD WOULD END. HE GLANCED ACROSS AT THE YOUNGER MAN BESIDE HIM. CLIVE LORNE'S FACE WAS A SICKLY GREEN. HE SEEMED TO BE STARING WITH UNSEEING EYES AT THE SCOTTISH SOLDIERS MILLING AROUND THE TANK.

CLIVE, YOU ALL RIGHT? JUST KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN, SON -- YOU'LL BE OKAY.

IF YE GANG ALONG WE US, KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN, LADDIE, AND MAYBE YE'LL KEN HOW REAL SOLDIERS FIGHT

CLIVE HARDLY HEARD BILL, FOR THE ROUGH SCOTTISH BROGUE BROUGHT DARK MEMORIES CROWDING BACK INTO HIS BRAIN.

CLIVE LORNE CAME OF A PROUD HIGHLAND FAMILY. ON THE LAST EVENING OF HIS EMBARKATION LEAVE, IN MAY, 1940, HE WAS FILLED WITH A WILD EXHILARATION THAT HE WAS TO FOLLOW THE FIGHTING TRADITIONS OF HIS ANCESTORS...

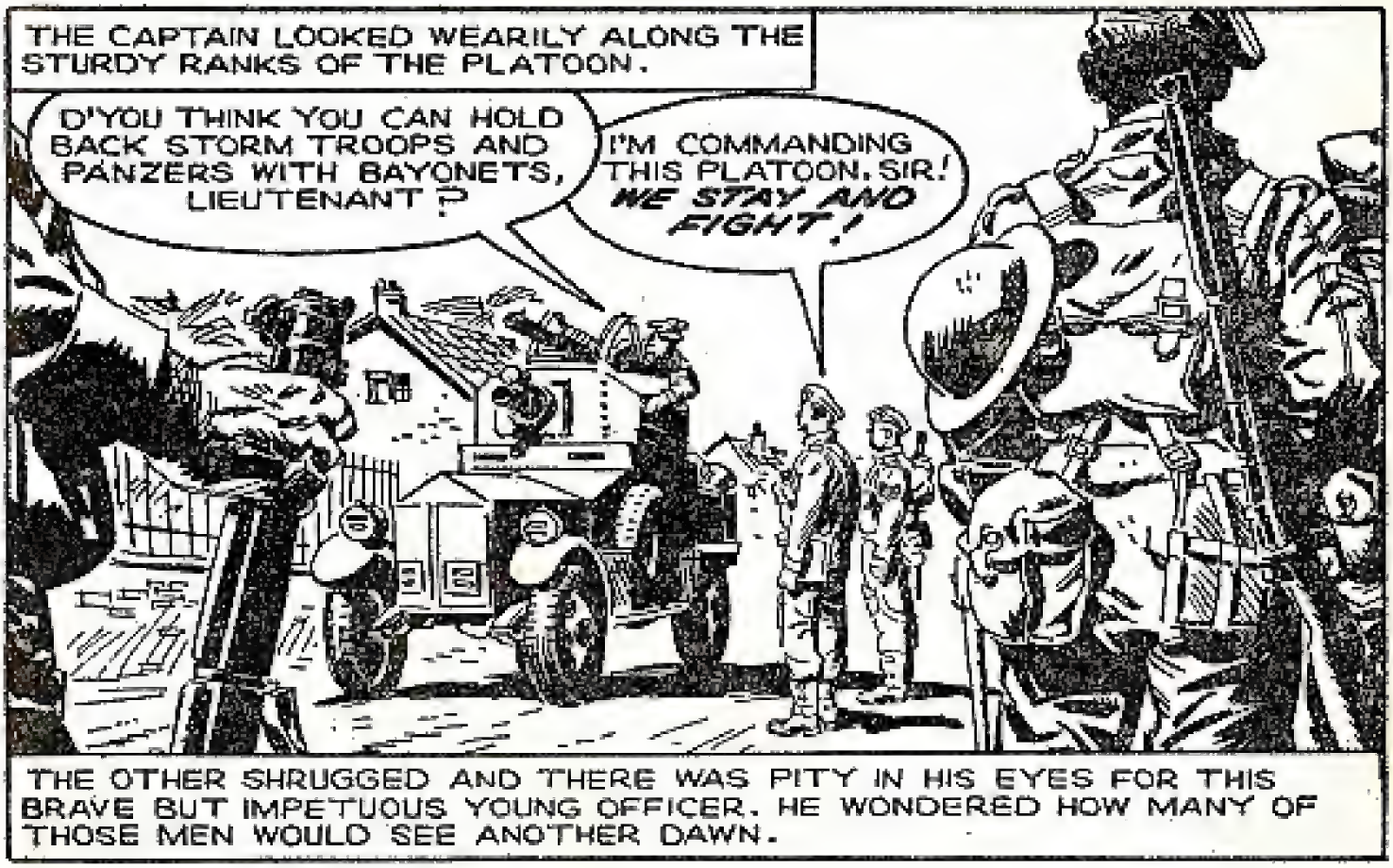
CLIVE, LAD, IT SEEMS BUT YESTERDAY YE WERE NOTHING BUT A WEE BAIRN. NOW YE LEAVE FOR BATTLE. YE'LL NOT FAIL WHEN THE TIME COMES, I KNOW...

I'LL NOT FAIL, FATHER.

THEY DRANK A TOAST. IT WAS PART OF THE FAMILY TRADITION, GOING BACK THROUGH A GORY HISTORY TO THE DAYS OF THE YOUNG PRETENDER.
TO ALL THE MEN WHO HAVE LEFT THIS FAMILY OF OURS TO FIGHT FOR KING AND COUNTRY~~TO THE FLOWERS OF BLAIRGOWERIE.

SO CLIVE WENT TO WAR WITH A LIGHT HEART. SOON, HE MARCHED AT THE HEAD OF HIS PLATOON INTO THE LITTLE BELGIUM VILLAGE OF TOURVEIN...
BY THE LOOK O' YON ARMOURED CAR, IT'S IN A TERRIBLE HURRY.
PLATOON HALT!

THE ARMOURED CAR WAS COMMANDED BY A DUST-STAINED CAPTAIN OF THE CARBINEERS. HIS HAGGARD FACE, MORE THAN HIS VOICE, TOLD THE TRAGIC EVENTS OF THE DAY.
JERRY HAS BROKEN THROUGH! THE FRONT'S CRUMBLING FAST. BEST PULL OUT WHILE YOU'VE GOT TIME!
RETREAT? WE'VE NOT COME ALL THIS WAY TO RUN, BEFORE A BULLET'S FIRED. LET THE BOCHE COME! WE'LL GIVE THEM A TASTE O' SCOTTISH STEEL!


THE CAPTAIN LOOKED WEARILY ALONG THE STURDY RANKS OF THE PLATOON.
D'YOU THINK YOU CAN HOLD BACK STORM TROOPS AND PANZERS WITH BAYONETS, LIEUTENANT ?
I'M COMMANDING THIS PLATOON, SIR! WE STAY AND FIGHT!
THE OTHER SHRUGGED AND THERE WAS PITY IN HIS EYES FOR THIS BRAVE BUT IMPETUOUS YOUNG OFFICER. HE WONDERED HOW MANY OF THOSE MEN WOULD SEE ANOTHER DAWN.

SO THE ARMOURED CAR MOVED OFF AND CLIVE RAPPED OUT HIS ORDERS.
ARE WE GOIN' TAE STAY THEN, SIR ?
OF COURSE, SERGEANT! NO LORNE HAS EVER RUN FROM THE ENEMY.
AS HE TURNED AWAY, THERE WAS A STEELY GRIMNESS IN SERGEANT MACINTYRE'S EYES. WITH AN OLD SOLDIER'S INSTINCT HE COULD SMELL DEATH IN THE AIR BUT, WITH YEARS OF INGRAINED DISCIPLINE, HE OBEYED ORDERS.

THE SUN HAD PASSED ITS ZENITH WHEN THEY HEARD THE FIRST OMINOUS MUTTERINGS OF THE APPROACHING STORM. TENSELY THE MEN EASED FORWARD SAFETY CATCHES AND WAITED.
STAND TO, MEN! SIGHTS FIVE HUNDRED! AWAIT MY ORDERS!
I DOOT WE STAND MUCH CHANCE, HERE, SANDY.
OCH, JOCK, FOR OLD SOLDIERS LIKE US 'TIS A GOOD WAY TO GO. BUT IT'S HARD FOR THE YOUNG 'UNS. THEY'LL NA BE GANGIN' HOME, I KEN!

THEN, IN THE AFTERNOON HAZE, FIGURES COULD BE SEEN MOVING ALONG THE ROAD. CLIVE RAISED HIS GLASSES --AND THE FULL HORROR OF TOTAL WAR SLAPPED HIM FULL IN THE FACE.

COLD SWEAT POURED DOWN THE LIEUTENANT'S FACE. THE ORDER TO FIRE DIED ON HIS LIPS. IT WAS THE STRONG VOICE OF SERGEANT MACINTYRE THAT GALVANISED THEM INTO ACTION.

BACK! BACK, ALL OF YE! GET BACK TO THE KIRK. 'TIS OUR ONLY CHANCE!

BUT EVEN AS THEY RACED BACK UP THE STREET, GREY-CLAD FIGURES HAD REACHED THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE VILLAGE AND THE AIR FILLED WITH THE WICKED CHANT OF AUTOMATICS AND THE HEAVY CRASH OF CANNON FIRE.

DINNA PANIC, LADS! HOLD THE LINE!

CLIVE STUMBLED BACK THROUGH THE SHAMBLES, HIS BRAIN REELING...

WHAT HAVE I DONE? THEY TRUSTED ME!

THE HIGHLANDERS FOUGHT WITH ALL THE HEROIC VALOUR THAT WAS THEIR HERITAGE BUT, ONE BY ONE, THE MURDEROUS FIRE FROM THE SPANDAUS CUT THEM DOWN.
DINNA SURRENDER, SERGEANT! DINNA LET THEM PUT YE OOT...

FIVE SURVIVORS OF THAT ILL-FATED PLATOON REACHED THE SANCTUARY OF THE BULLET-CHIPPED CLOISTER, ONLY TO KEEP AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE SAVAGE DESTRUCTION OF A NAZI ARTILLERY SHELL.
AAAGH!

A HARSH COMMAND RANG OUT AND THE FIRING CEASED ABRUPTLY.
SHALL WE SEARCH FOR WOUNDED, HERR HAUPTMANN?
NEIN, WE ADVANCE AT ONCE. THERE ARE BIGGER PRIZES AWAITING US.

THE NAZI OFFICER WAS WRONG. THERE WAS ONE MAN WHO HAD SURVIVED. HE SAT FOR A LONG WHILE AMID THE RUINS.
DINNA BLAME YE'SELF, SERGEANT MACINTYRE SAID. JUST BE PROUD O' 'EM. THEY WENT OUT FACING THE ENEMY...

WITH THE COMING OF NIGHT, CLIVE LORNE WANDERED OFF, CARING LITTLE WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM. OF ONE THING HE WAS CERTAIN. WITH THE BURDEN OF GUILT HE NOW CARRIED, HE COULD NEVER RETURN TO FACE HIS KINSFOLK.
THEY'RE AT PEACE NOW. WHY COULDN'T I HAVE DIED WITH THEM? WHY DID I HAVE TO LIVE?

INSTINCTIVELY, HE HEADED TOWARDS THE COAST. AT FIRST LIGHT, HE CAME ACROSS A WIDE SANDY BEACH WHERE LONG CROCODILES OF WEARY MEN PATIENTLY SHUFFLED TOWARDS SAFETY. HE HAD REACHED DUNKIRK.
NO USE LOOKING BACK, TOSH! COME ON!
AYE, IT'S NO USE LOOKING BACK NOW. THEY WON'T BE COMING. THE ONLY MAN IN THE PLATOON TO REACH DUNKIRK ALIVE! THAT'S ME--THEIR LEADER!

LATER THAT DAY, HE LANDED AT FOLKESTONE WHERE A HARASSED WARRANT OFFICER WAS ATTEMPTING TO SORT ORDER FROM THE CHAOS.
SPIT IT OUT! NAME, RANK AND NUMBER! I HAVEN'T GOT ALL DAY!
LORNE, C. LORNE -- TROOPER. I WAS IN -- THE TANKS. I'VE LOST MY PAY BOOK. I...

BEFORE HE COULD RETRACT THE INVOLUNTARY LIE THAT HAD SPRUNG FROM HIS LIPS, HE WAS BRUSQUELY ORDERED TO MOVE ON.

LUCKY THAT'S ALL YOU LOST. NEXT...

ALL RIGHT, SOLDIER, UP ON THE TRUCK. WE'LL SORT YOU OUT IN BARRACKS.

THAT HAD BEEN OVER THREE YEARS AGO. TROOPER LORNE JERKED BACK TO REALITY AS THE C.O.'S VOICE CAME UP ON THE AIR.

YOKE THREE WILL ENGAGE ENEMY TANKS. YOKE FOUR WILL SUPPORT INFANTRY ON TO OBJECTIVE. OVER.

YOKE THREE, WILCO, OUT. SHOVE A.P. UP THE SPOUT, CLIVE, AND GET YOUR HATCHES CLOSED. LOOKS PRETTY WARM UP AHEAD.

THEY ROLLED FORWARD IN A GRIM TWILIGHT OF SWIRLING DUST, BROKEN HERE AND THERE BY BLACKENED HULKS AND FIERCELY BURNING TANKS. THAT WAS ALL THAT REMAINED OF "A" AND "B" SQUADRONS.

LEFT STICK...FLAT OUT, GEORDIE. HERE WE GO! GUNNER, TRAVERSE RIGHT!

SUDDENLY, THE FOG PARTED TO REVEAL THE MALIGNANT HORROR OF A ROYAL TIGER, ITS ENORMOUS EIGHTY-EIGHT M.M. GUN GROPING LIKE A BLIND ANTENNA BEFORE IT.

TRAVERSE RIGHT~~STEADY ON! *OPEN FIRE!* GEORDIE, GIVE HER EVERYTHING YOU'VE GOT~~ OR WE'RE DEAD DUCKS!

STAN MITCHELL SAW THE TIGER LOOM IN HIS TELESCOPIC SIGHT. WITH COOL DELIBERATION, HE BROUGHT THE CROSS WIRES TO BEAR. HIS FOOT STABBED DOWN ON THE FIRING PEDAL.

THE SHOT STRUCK DEAD CENTRE, BUT THE 17-POUNDER HAD NEVER BEEN INTENDED TO PUNCTURE THE MASSIVE ARMOURED PLATING OF THE GERMAN MONSTER.

THE SERGEANT'S VOICE ROSE TO A YELL. LORNE FED ROUNDS INTO THE HOT BREECH AS FAST AS THE GUN LASHED BACK ON ITS RECOIL.

FIRE! FIRE!

EVERY ONE A HIT--AN' IT MIGHT AS WELL BE A PEASHOOTER!

THEN FLAME LANCED FROM THE MUZZLE OF THE NAZI EIGHTY-EIGHT.

RARELY DID THE NOTORIOUS EIGHTY-EIGHT EVER MISS, BUT THE GERMAN GUNNER HAD BEEN DISTRACTED BY THE INCESSANT BOMBARDMENT FROM THE BRITISH TANK. THE SHELL PLOUGHED A FURROW OF DEATH THROUGH THE LITTLE CLUSTER OF INFANTRY HUGGING THE SIDE OF THE CROMWELL.

AAAGH!

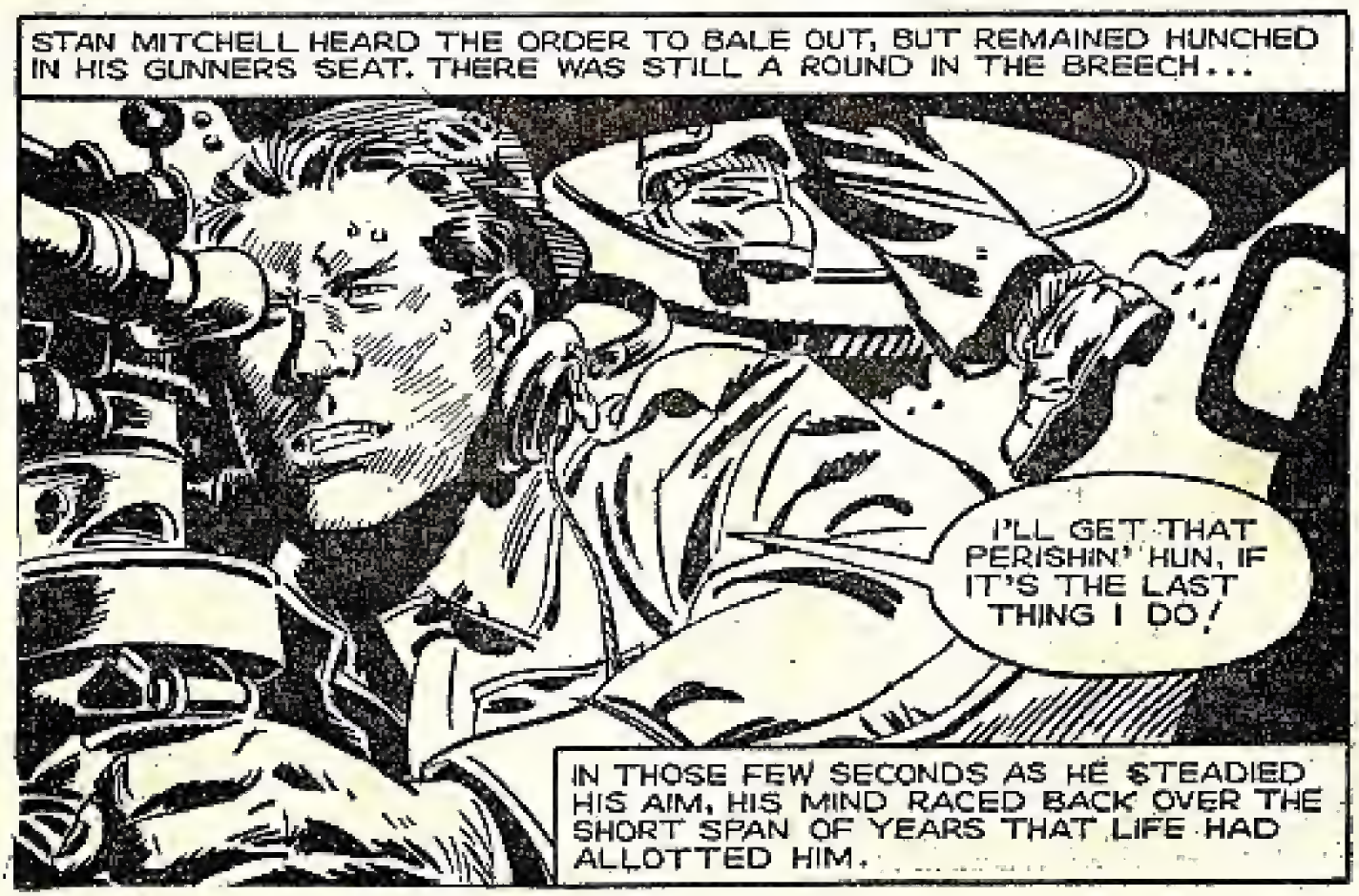
AAIIEE!

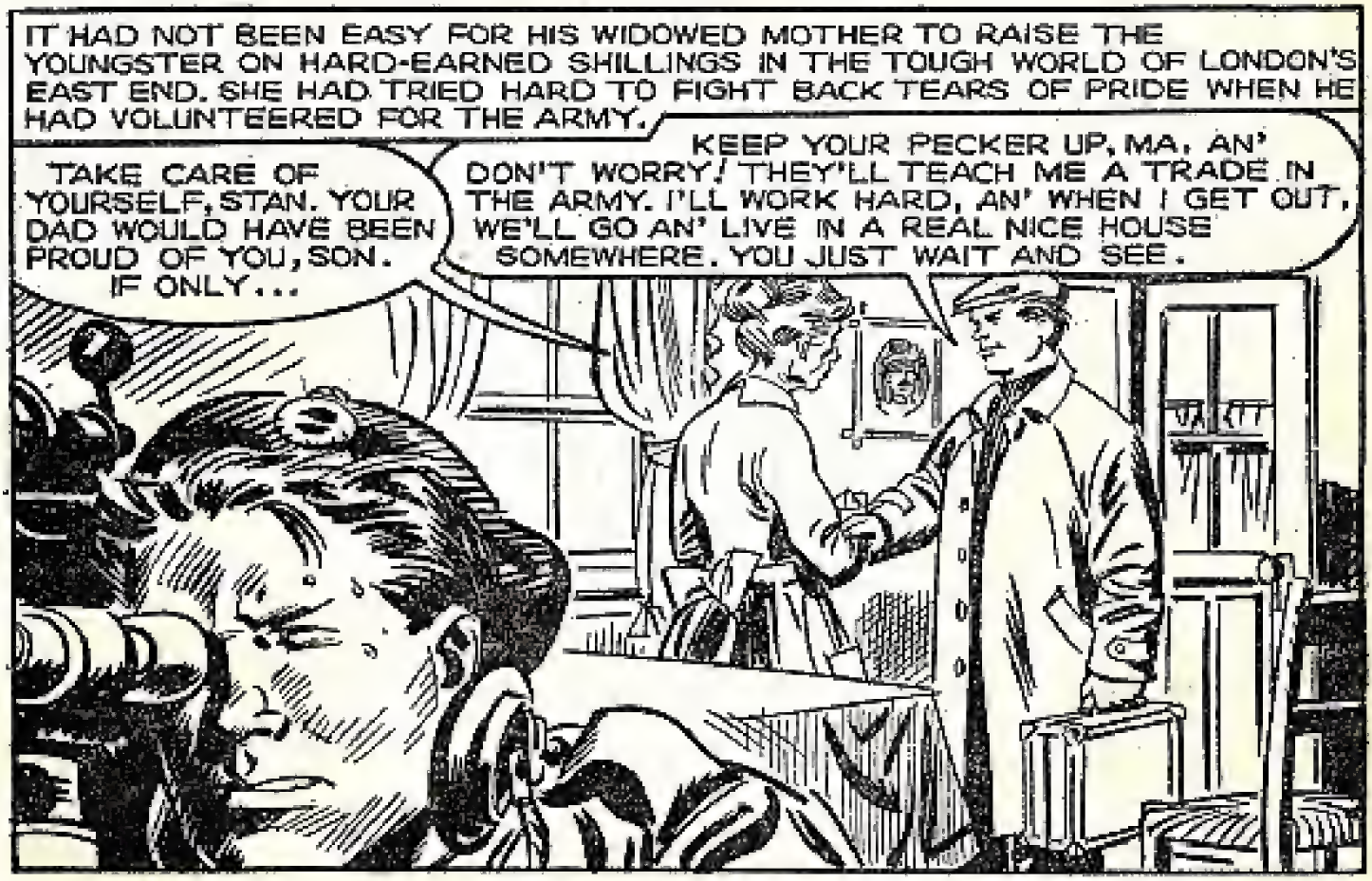
INSIDE SERGEANT DURRANT'S BRAIN, SOMETHING SNAPPED. THE GERMANS NEVER MISSED TWICE. IT WOULD BE LESS THAN THIRTY SECONDS BEFORE THEY FIRED AGAIN. HE HAD SEEN THE MOUNTAIN, MET THE TIGER.

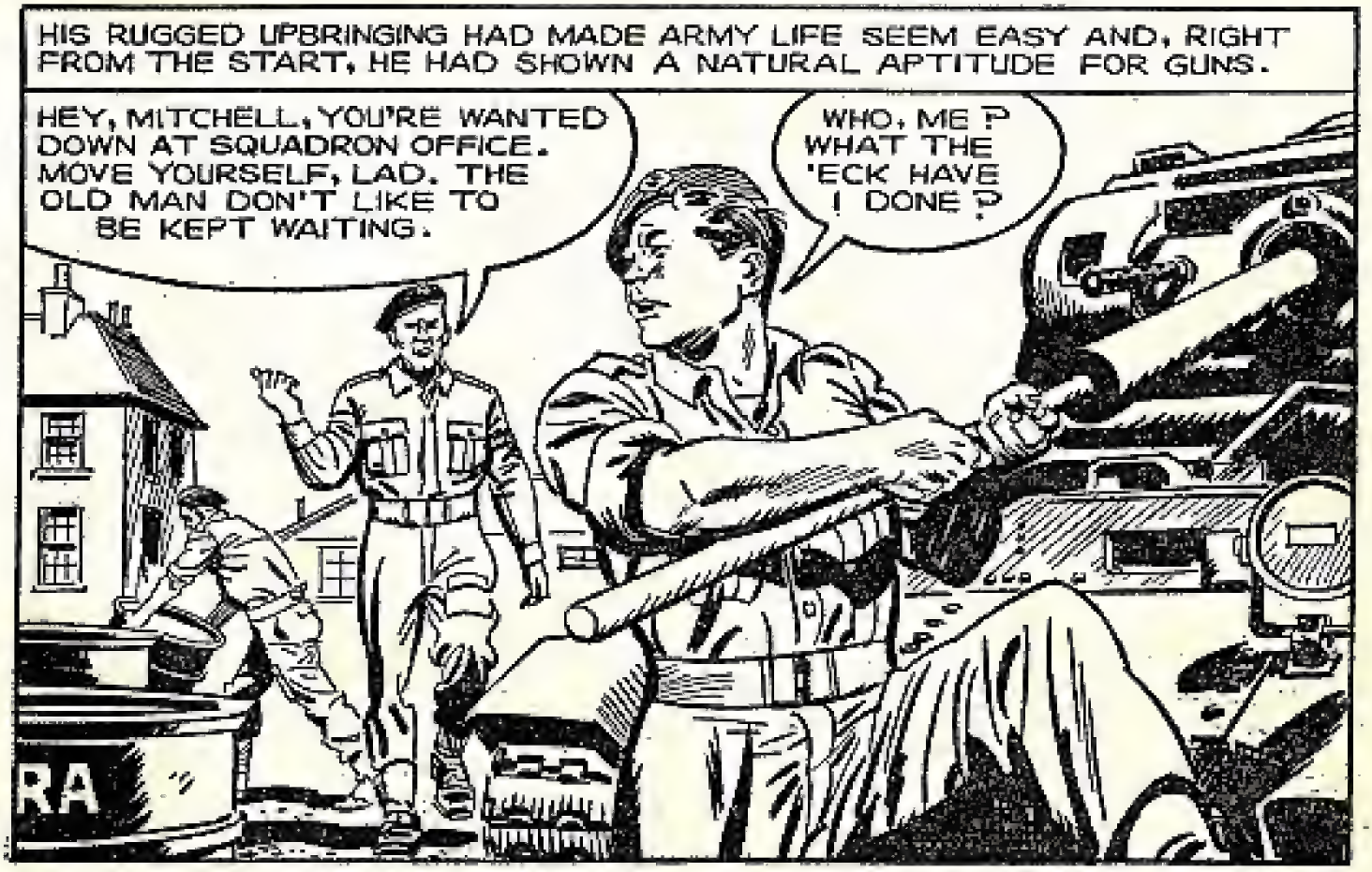
BALE OUT! WE'VE HAD IT! BALE OUT!

TWO OTHER FIGURES HURRIED AFTER HIM FROM THE DOOMED TANK.

HE RAN BLINDLY FOR NEARLY TWENTY YARDS. THE OLD FOOL OF AN ARAB HAD BEEN WRONG! HE WAS GOING TO LIVE! HE WAS SMILING WHEN A LONG BURST FROM A SPANDAU LATCHED ON TO HIM.


STAN MITCHELL HEARD THE ORDER TO BALE OUT, BUT REMAINED HUNCHED IN HIS GUNNERS SEAT. THERE WAS STILL A ROUND IN THE BREECH...
I'LL GET THAT PERISHIN' HUN, IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO!
IN THOSE FEW SECONDS AS HE STEADIED HIS AIM, HIS MIND RACED BACK OVER THE SHORT SPAN OF YEARS THAT LIFE HAD ALLOTTED HIM.


IT HAD NOT BEEN EASY FOR HIS WIDOWED MOTHER TO RAISE THE YOUNGSTER ON HARD-EARNED SHILLINGS IN THE TOUGH WORLD OF LONDON'S EAST END. SHE HAD TRIED HARD TO FIGHT BACK TEARS OF PRIDE WHEN HE HAD VOLUNTEERED FOR THE ARMY.
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, STAN. YOUR DAD WOULD HAVE BEEN PROUD OF YOU, SON. IF ONLY...
KEEP YOUR PECKER UP, MA, AN' DON'T WORRY! THEY'LL TEACH ME A TRADE IN THE ARMY. I'LL WORK HARD, AN' WHEN I GET OUT, WE'LL GO AN' LIVE IN A REAL NICE HOUSE SOMEWHERE. YOU JUST WAIT AND SEE.


HIS RUGGED UPBRINGING HAD MADE ARMY LIFE SEEM EASY AND, RIGHT FROM THE START, HE HAD SHOWN A NATURAL APTITUDE FOR GUNS.
HEY, MITCHELL, YOU'RE WANTED DOWN AT SQUADRON OFFICE. MOVE YOURSELF, LAD. THE OLD MAN DON'T LIKE TO BE KEPT WAITING.
WHO, ME? WHAT THE 'ECK HAVE I DONE?
RA

A SMILE THAWED THE MAJOR'S FACE AS HE LOOKED AT THE ANXIOUS YOUNG SOLDIER WHO HAD BEEN MARCHED INTO THE OFFICE.
TROOPER MITCHELL, SIR! YOU WANTED TO SEE HIM.
AT EASE, MITCHELL. I WANTED TO CONGRATULATE YOU ON THIS REPORT FROM THE GUNNERY WING. YOU'VE SCORED THE HIGHEST GRADING EVER OBTAINED BY THIS TRAINING UNIT. I'M RECOMMENDING YOU FOR TRADE TRAINING AS AN ARMOURER. WOULD YOU LIKE THAT?

THE TRAIN COULD NOT GET YOUNG MITCHELL HOME FAST ENOUGH ON HIS FORTY-EIGHT HOUR PASS. AFTER WHAT SEEMED AN ETERNITY HE TURNED THE CORNER, INTO THE FAMILIAR DINGY LITTLE STREET, ONLY TO BE BROUGHT TO AN ABRUPT HALT.
SORRY, SOLDIER, YOU CAN'T GO DOWN THERE. NASTY INCIDENT LAST NIGHT. JERRY DROPPED A STICK OF BOMBS. ANYONE YOU KNOW LIVE DOWN THERE?
N-NUMBER TWELVE! WHAT....

THE WARDEN HAD KNOWN STAN SINCE HIS SCHOOL DAYS.

SORRY, SON. IT WAS A DIRECT HIT! YOUR MOTHER -- IT WAS ALL OVER VERY QUICKLY.

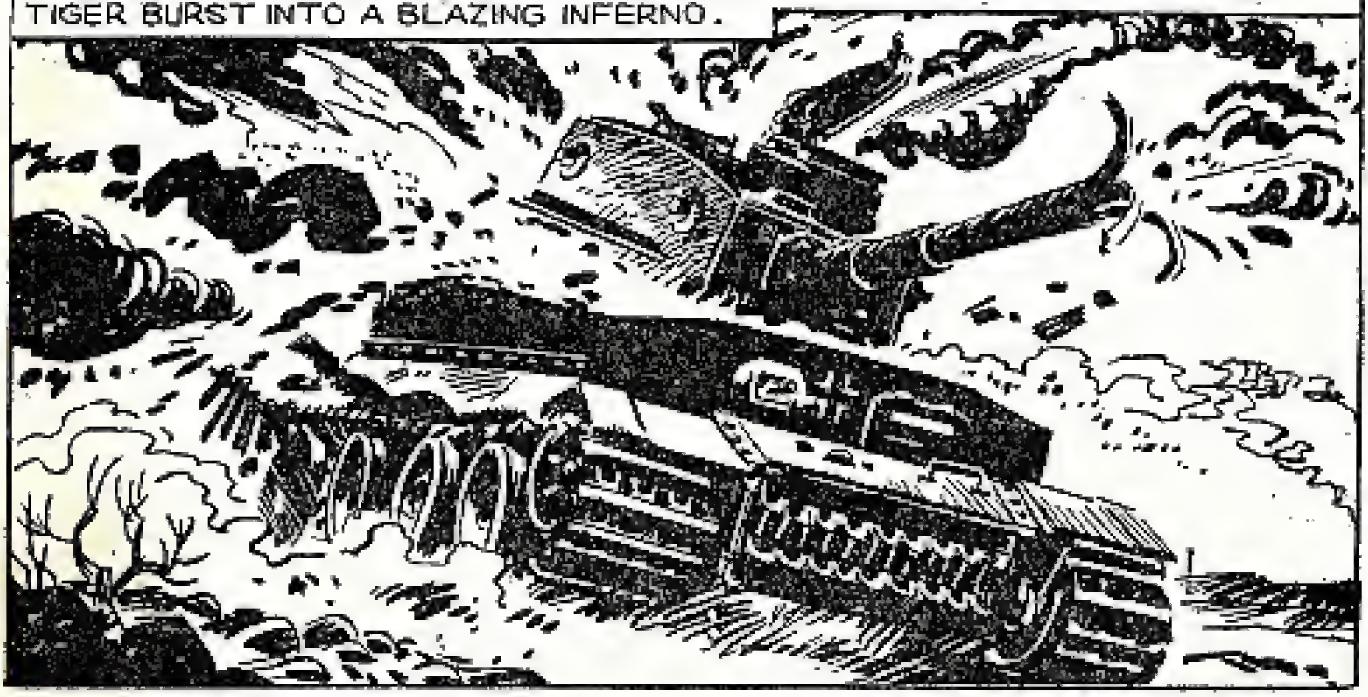
SLOWLY STAN WALKED AWAY. ALL HE WANTED WAS TO HEAR THE SAVAGE ROAR OF GUNS HURLING HIGH EXPLOSIVE AT EVERY GERMAN HE COULD GET IN HIS SIGHTS.

THE SQUADRON COMMANDER HAD UNDERSTOOD THE DULL ACHE IN THE LAD'S EYES AND THE REFUSAL OF EMBARKATION LEAVE. AT EIGHTEEN, STAN MITCHELL HAD SAILED FOR ACTIVE SERVICE. THE BEST SHOT IN THE REGIMENT, AND OLD ENOUGH TO DIE.

ONE ROUND! JUST ONE ROUND LEFT, AND GEORDIE DRIVING THE TANK LIKE A MADMAN. IT WOULD HAVE TO BE THE FINEST SHOT HE HAD EVER MADE. THE CROSS WIRES FLICKERED ACROSS THE BLACK MUZZLE OF THE EIGHTY-EIGHT AT POINT-BLANK RANGE. IT HAD TO BE ~~ ***NOW!***

Chapter 3. The Last Charge

FROM A REARING, BUCKING TANK THE ACCURACY OF THE SHOT HAD BEEN LITTLE SHORT OF A MIRACLE. THE 17-POUNDER H.E. SHELL SLAMMED STRAIGHT DOWN THE YAWNING MUZZLE OF THE GERMAN GUN AND THE TIGER BURST INTO A BLAZING INFERNO.

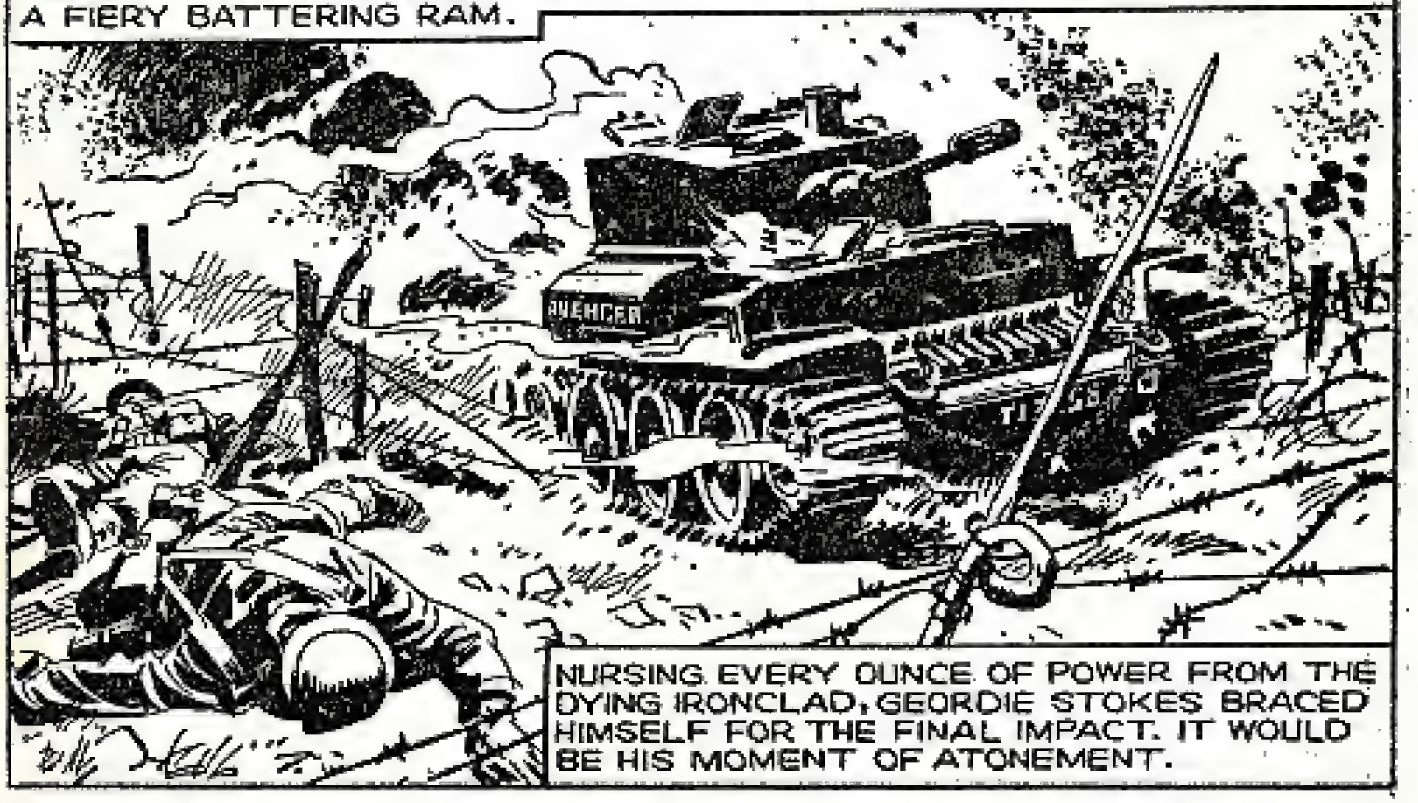


PERHAPS STAN MITCHELL DID CATCH JUST ONE BRIEF GLIMPSE OF HIS MOMENT OF VICTORY BEFORE A GERMAN ANTI-TANK GUN CUT SHORT HIS LIFE. IF HE DID, HE PROBABLY FELT THE PRICE HE HAD PAID WAS WORTH IT.

THE HUSSARS HAD CARVED A TERRIBLE PATH OF DESTRUCTION THROUGH THE ENEMY ARMOUR. BUT THERE WERE PATHETICALLY FEW LEFT TO SUPPORT THE INFANTRY FOR THE FINAL ASSAULT.
THEY ARE THROUGH OUR PANZERS, HERR OBERST!
JA. BUT THEY HAVE PAID DEARLY FOR IT. THERE ARE TOO FEW LEFT FOR THEM TO ASSAULT. OPEN FIRE WITH OUR HOWITZERS. THOSE INFANTRY SHALL DIE WHERE THEY LAY.

AFTER HE HAD BALED OUT, CLIVE LORNE RACED FORWARD THROUGH A MERCILESS HAIL OF FLYING LEAD AND FLUNG HIMSELF HEADLONG INTO A SHELL SCRAPE.
I KEN YE DID YER BEST, LADDIE. BUT YE' NAE USE WI' OOT YER TANK.
MOST OF US BOUGHT IT WHEN WE HIT THE TIGERS. MY GUESS IS THEY'LL LAY DOWN SMOKE AND TRY TO PULL US BACK.
LOOK! THERE'S ONE THAT'S GOING TO TRY!

ONLY ONE TANK WENT ROARING ON, A DEAD GUNNER SLUMPED IN ITS SHATTERED TURRET AND FLAMES LICKING PERILOUSLY CLOSE TO ITS FUEL TANKS. IT CARVED ITS WAY THROUGH THE BARBED WIRE LIKE A FIERY BATTERING RAM.



NURSING EVERY OUNCE OF POWER FROM THE DYING IRONCLAD, GEORDIE STOKES BRACED HIMSELF FOR THE FINAL IMPACT. IT WOULD BE HIS MOMENT OF ATONEMENT.

STOKES HAD NOT ALWAYS BEEN THE BITTER, HARD-FACED MAN WHO HAD DRIVEN HIS TANK SLOWLY ACROSS THE SICILIAN PLAIN.

GET A GRIP OF STOKES, SERGEANT-MAJOR. HE'S A GOOD LAD BUT A BIT WILD. HE'LL KILL SOMEONE OR LAND UP IN HOSPITAL THE WAY HE'S GOING ON.

I'LL SORT 'IM OUT, SIR!

THE SERGEANT-MAJOR'S ADMONISHMENT WAS TEMPERED WITH UNDERSTANDING. HE KNEW THE NERVE-RACKING STRAIN ENDURED BY EVERY DESPATCH RIDER ON ACTIVE SERVICE.

YOU SAVE YOUR WALL-O-DEATH STUNTS FOR THE SHARP END, STOKES. NOW CUT ALONG TO THE ORDERLY ROOM A BIT SHARPISH. THERE'S A DESPATCH TO GO UP THE LINE.

OKAY, SIR. IT'S AS GOOD AS THERE.

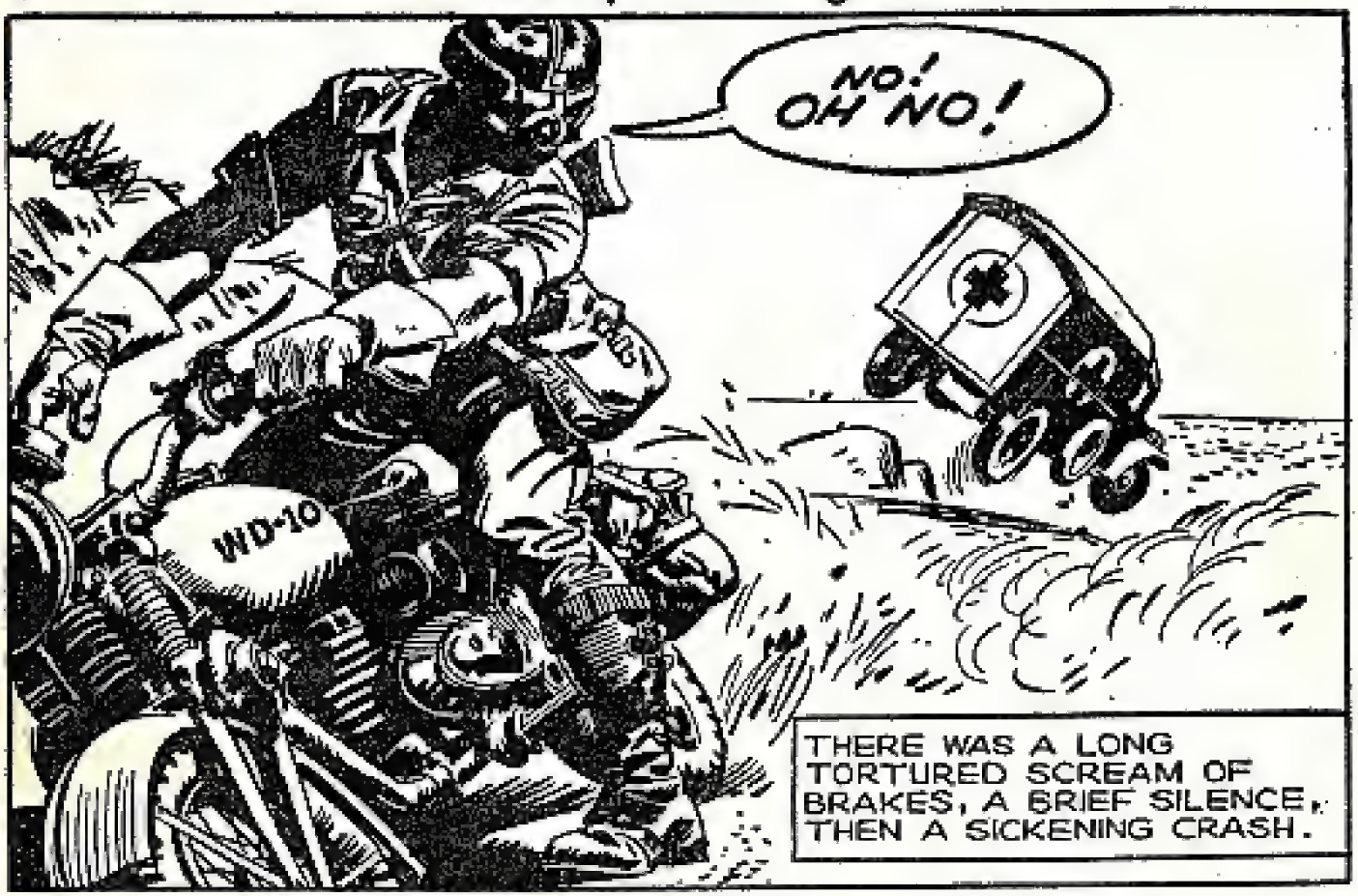
TEN MINUTES LATER, GEORDIE WAS HEADING UP THE COAST ROAD. AS USUAL, HIS THROTTLE WAS WIDE OPEN.

COME ON, SWEETHEART— LET'S SEE IF YOU CAN CLOCK EIGHTY-FIVE!

THE BEND AHEAD WAS DECEPTIVELY SHARP, BUT TO THE SPEED-HUNGRY DESPATCH RIDER IT PRESENTED ONLY ANOTHER CHALLENGE.

THE DRIVER OF THE AMBULANCE NEVER STOOD A CHANCE.

THE CRAZY FOOL!


OH NO! NO!
WD-10
THERE WAS A LONG TORTURED SCREAM OF BRAKES, A BRIEF SILENCE, THEN A SICKENING CRASH.

THERE WAS ONLY ONE SURVIVOR OF THE CRASH. GEORDIE WAS TO CARRY HIS WORDS FOR THE REMAINDER OF HIS DAYS.
YOU ROTTEN MURDERER! THOSE POOR DEVILS HAD JUST COME BACK FROM THE LINE. THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE LUCKY. DONE THEIR BIT, GOING BACK TO BLIGHTY. FUNNY, AIN'T IT! WHY DON'T YOU LAUGH?

BUT GEORDIE NEVER LAUGHED AGAIN. THE COURT-MARTIAL SENTENCED HIM TO SIXTY DAYS FIELD PUNISHMENT FOR CRIMINAL NEGLIGENCE. IT WAS A SENTENCE HE NEVER COMPLETED. THE AFRIKA KORPS BROKE THROUGH AND EVERY MAN WAS PRESSED INTO SERVICE. SINCE THEN, THEY HAD SCARCELY BEEN OUT OF THE FIGHT.

GEORDIE'S A RUM CHARACTER, SERGEANT. I'VE SAT BESIDE HIM IN THAT TANK FOR TWO WEEKS NOW, AND HE'S HARDLY SAID A WORD.

JUST LEAVE HIM BE. HE'S A FIRST-CLASS DRIVER AND NEVER TAKES CHANCES. THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS WHEN YOU'RE IN ACTION.

AVENGER

THE SANDS OF GEORDIE'S LIFE WERE RUNNING OUT, TOO. PERHAPS, AT THE END, THERE WAS SOME VESTIGE OF PEACE ON HIS FACE AS HE KEPT THE BLAZING TANK ON COURSE. WHO KNOWS ?

HIMMEL! THE ENGLANDER IS MAD!

AAAAGH!

AVENGER

THERE WAS A HORRIBLE GRINDING OF STEEL AGAINST CONCRETE AS THE TANK, LIKE SOME NIGHTMARISH DRAGON, REARED AT THE GERMAN PILLBOX. THEN CLIVE LORNE WAS ON HIS FEET...
THIS IS OUR CHANCE, LADS! IS THERE A PIPER AMONG YOU?
AYE, LADDIE, I'VE STILL GOT MA PIPES!
THEN PLAY UP THE RED MACGREGOR! FORWARD, MEN! CHARGE!
LEAD ON, MON, WE'RE WITH YE!

ABOVE THE TUMULT OF BATTLE ROSE THE SKIRL OF THE PIPES. THE SCOTS HEARD AND TOOK HEART AND WILD, BARBARIC BATTLE CRIES ECHOED FROM A HUNDRED HIGHLANDERS' THROATS.

THE GERMAN LINE WAS BREACHED. NOTHING COULD CHECK THE FLOOD OF WILD-EYED MEN WHO STORMED THROUGH THE GAP...

CLIVE LORNE FELL CLOSE BY THE TANK HE HAD ONCE SERVED. HIS LIFE BLOOD EBBING AWAY. THERE WAS A WILD THISTLE STILL BLOOMING IN THAT RAVAGED GROUND. HE REACHED OUT TO TOUCH IT GENTLY...
IT WAS AS CLOSE AS HE COULD EVER GET TO THE FLOWERS OF BLAIRGOWERIE.

INSIDE THE WRECKED TANK, GEORDIE STOKES SLOWLY TURNED HIS HEAD. HE COULD FEEL NO PAIN, BUT HIS EYES WERE GROWING DIM. HE COULD JUST STILL SEE THE SCORCHING DRAWINGS ON THE SEAT BESIDE HIM.
YOU ALWAYS WERE A ROTTEN SOLDIER, JOHNNIE, BOY-- BUT YOU'RE A DARNED FINE ARTIST...

JOHN TREVELLYAN HAD BEEN THE LAST OF THE THREE MEN TO BALE OUT. HE WAS A HUNDRED YARDS FROM THE TANK WHEN HE HALTED AND LOOKED BACK IN DISMAY.
MY SKETCHES! THE ONLY THINGS I EVER DID THAT WERE ANY GOOD! NOW IT'S TOO LATE!
IT WAS A MOMENT OF BLANK DESPAIR. THE CULMINATION OF A LIFE WHICH UP UNTIL THEN APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY WASTED.

THE WAR HAD SEEMED VERY REMOTE IN THAT ISOLATED CORNISH VILLAGE WHERE HE HAD LIVED.
JOHN, YOUR CALLING-UP PAPERS HAVE ARRIVED!
OH DRAT! WHY THE DICKENS CAN'T THEY GET ON WITH THEIR WAR AND LEAVE ME IN PEACE?

JENNIFER HAD ALWAYS BEEN FOND OF HER BROTHER, THOUGH WITH SOME FRUSTRATION OF LATE.

PERHAPS NOW YOU'LL STOP WASTING YOUR LIFE AND DO SOMETHING WORTHWHILE.

I WILL, LITTLE SISTER, I PROMISE YOU! BUT NOT AS A CONQUERING HERO. IT'LL BE AS A GREAT ARTIST THAT YOU'LL BE PROUD OF ME.

THE ARMY CALLED JOHN TO THE COLOURS, BUT FROM THE VERY START IT WAS NOT A HAPPY UNION.

I'VE SEEN SOME 'ORRIBLE THINGS IN MY LIFE, BUT YOU TAKE THE BISCUIT, TREVELLYAN! GET YOUR PERISHIN' HAIR CUT, 'FORE YOU TRIP OVER IT!

YES, SIR — I MEAN, SERGEANT!

HE WAS POSTED TO THE ROYAL ARMOURED CORPS, WHERE HE GROUND LABORIOUSLY THROUGH A LONG AND PAINFUL TRAINING.

I'M AWFULLY SORRY, CORPORAL!

'COR, SUFFERING CATFISH! YOU CLUMSY GREAT OAF! YOU AIN'T FIT TO PUSH A PRAM!

AT LAST, A LONG SUFFERING TRAINING DEPOT GAVE UP THE ATTEMPT TO MAKE A SOLDIER OF HIM, AND HE WAS DRAFTED TO THE HUSSARS AT A BASE CAMP IN THE JORDAN.
SERGEANT DURRANT IS SHORT OF A GUNNER MECH. YOU'D BETTER LET HIM HAVE THIS NEW BLOKE, TREVELLYAN.
VERY GOOD, SIR.... THOUGH I DON'T KNOW WHAT POOR OLD BILL HAS DONE TO DESERVE HIM!

WITHIN A WEEK OF JOINING THE UNIT, JOHN WAS BROUGHT BEFORE THE COMMANDING OFFICER~~ ON A CHARGE!
O-THREE-NINE, TROOPER TREVELLYAN, CHARGED WITH NEGLECT OF DUTY, SIR. WHILE ACTING AS ANTI-AIRCRAFT SENTRY ON EXERCISE, THE ACCUSED WAS FOUND TO BE DRAWING, SIR!
HE WAS WHAT? HAVE YOU ANYTHING TO SAY FOR YOURSELF, TREVELLYAN?

COLONEL WINCANDY WAS AN OFFICER OF LONG EXPERIENCE AND PATIENCE, BUT HE DOUBTED IF THE YOUNG SOLDIER BEFORE HIM WOULD EVER SHAPE UP TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE REGIMENT.

I'M SORRY, SIR. YOU SEE, IT WAS SUCH A LOVELY VIEW, I JUST...

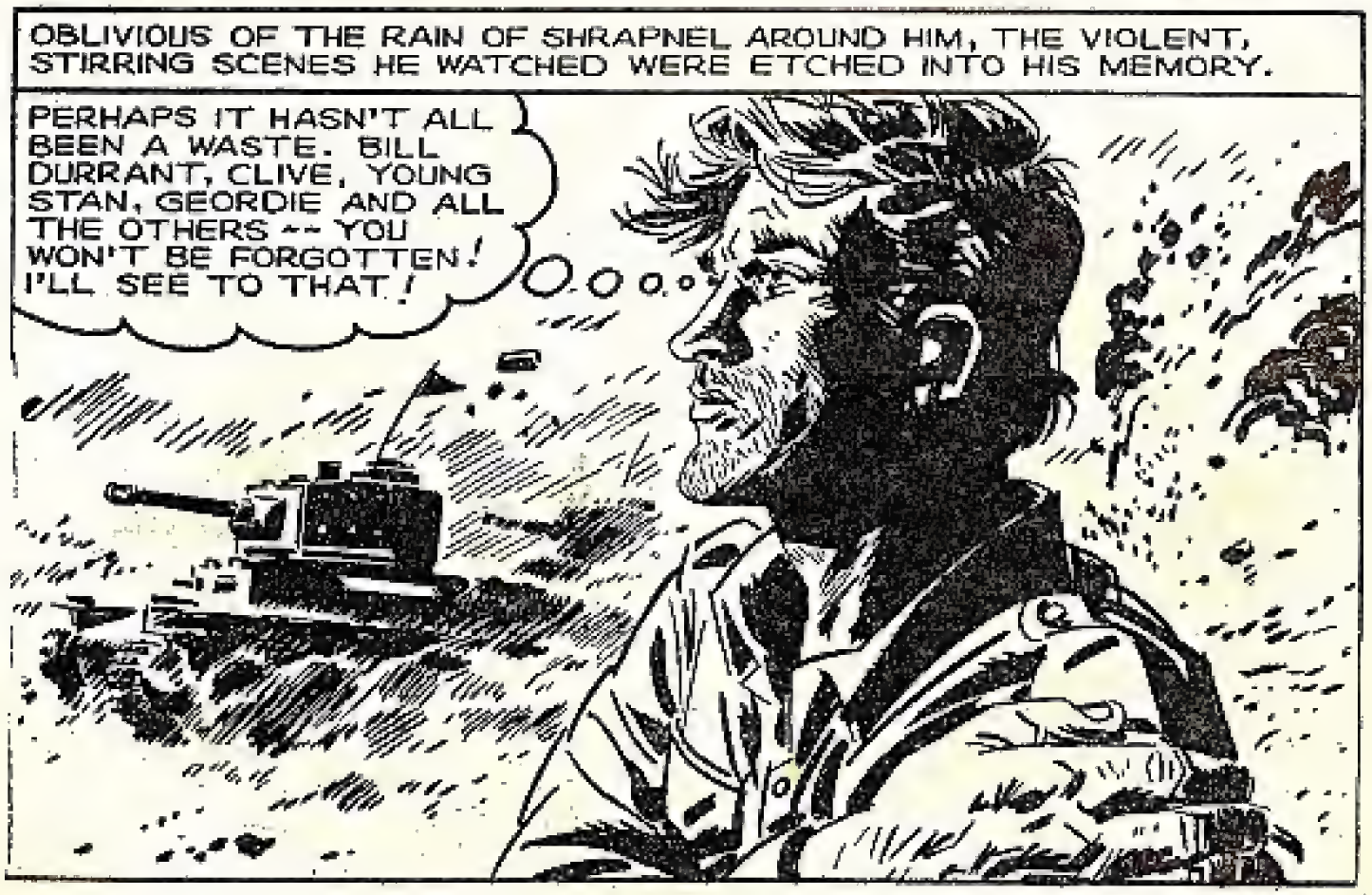
IF A STUKA HAD COME DOWN, I DOUBT IF IT WOULD HAVE SEEMED SO LOVELY! PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER, MAN, OR YOU'LL NEVER BE ANY USE TO THIS UNIT! TEN DAYS' C.B.! MARCH HIM OUT, SERGEANT-MAJOR!

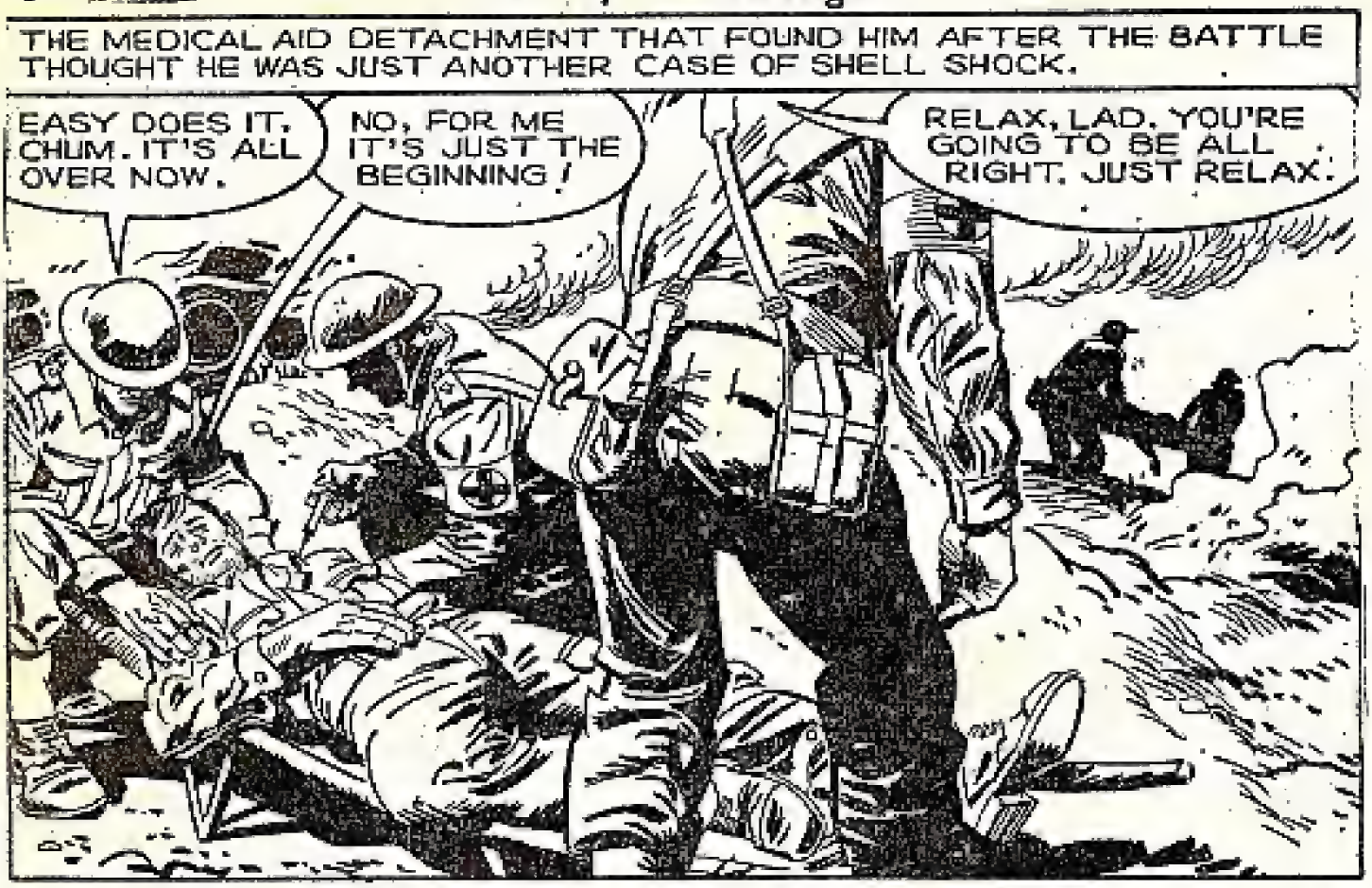
PRISONER AND ESCORT, *LEFT TURN, QUICK... MARCH!*

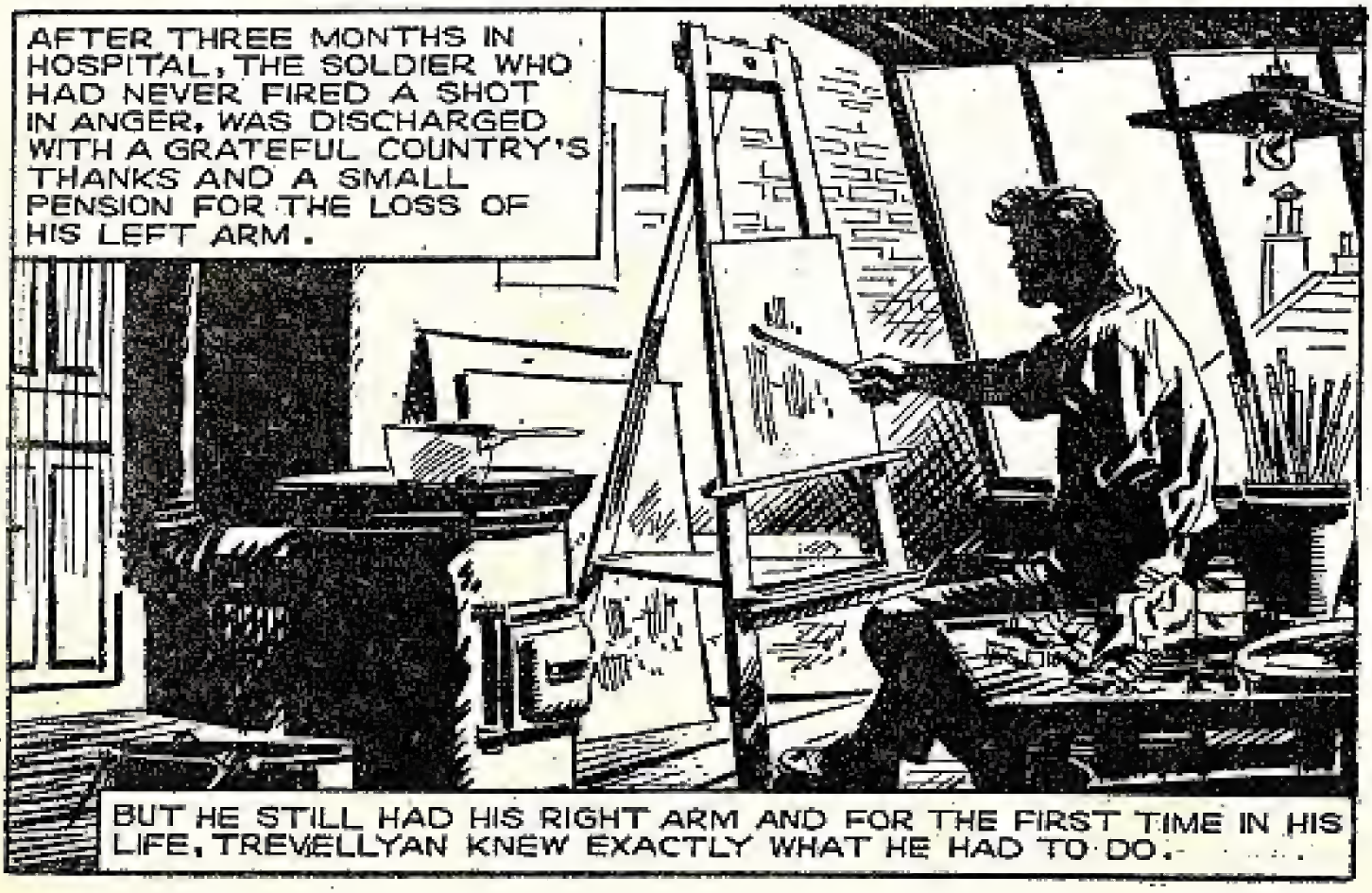
NINE MONTHS OF EXHAUSTIVE TRAINING, WEEKS OF WEARY TRAVEL AND HOURS OF PATIENT WAITING HAD BROUGHT JOHN TREVELLYAN TO HIS FIRST ACTION. THERE, IRONICALLY, HE NEVER FIRED A SINGLE SHOT.

THE COLONEL WAS RIGHT~~ I NEVER WAS ANY USE TO THE REGIMENT!

THEN HE SAW THE LAST MOMENTS OF *AVENGER'S* LIFE AND HEARD THE WILD SYMPHONY OF DEATH AS THE BRITISH FORCE AT LAST BROKE THROUGH THE GERMAN LINES.


OBLIVIOUS OF THE RAIN OF SHRAPNEL AROUND HIM, THE VIOLENT, STIRRING SCENES HE WATCHED WERE ETCHED INTO HIS MEMORY.
PERHAPS IT HASN'T ALL BEEN A WASTE. BILL DURRANT, CLIVE, YOUNG STAN, GEORDIE AND ALL THE OTHERS -- YOU WON'T BE FORGOTTEN! I'LL SEE TO THAT!


THE MEDICAL AID DETACHMENT THAT FOUND HIM AFTER THE BATTLE THOUGHT HE WAS JUST ANOTHER CASE OF SHELL SHOCK.
EASY DOES IT, CHUM. IT'S ALL OVER NOW.
NO, FOR ME IT'S JUST THE BEGINNING!
RELAX, LAD. YOU'RE GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT. JUST RELAX.

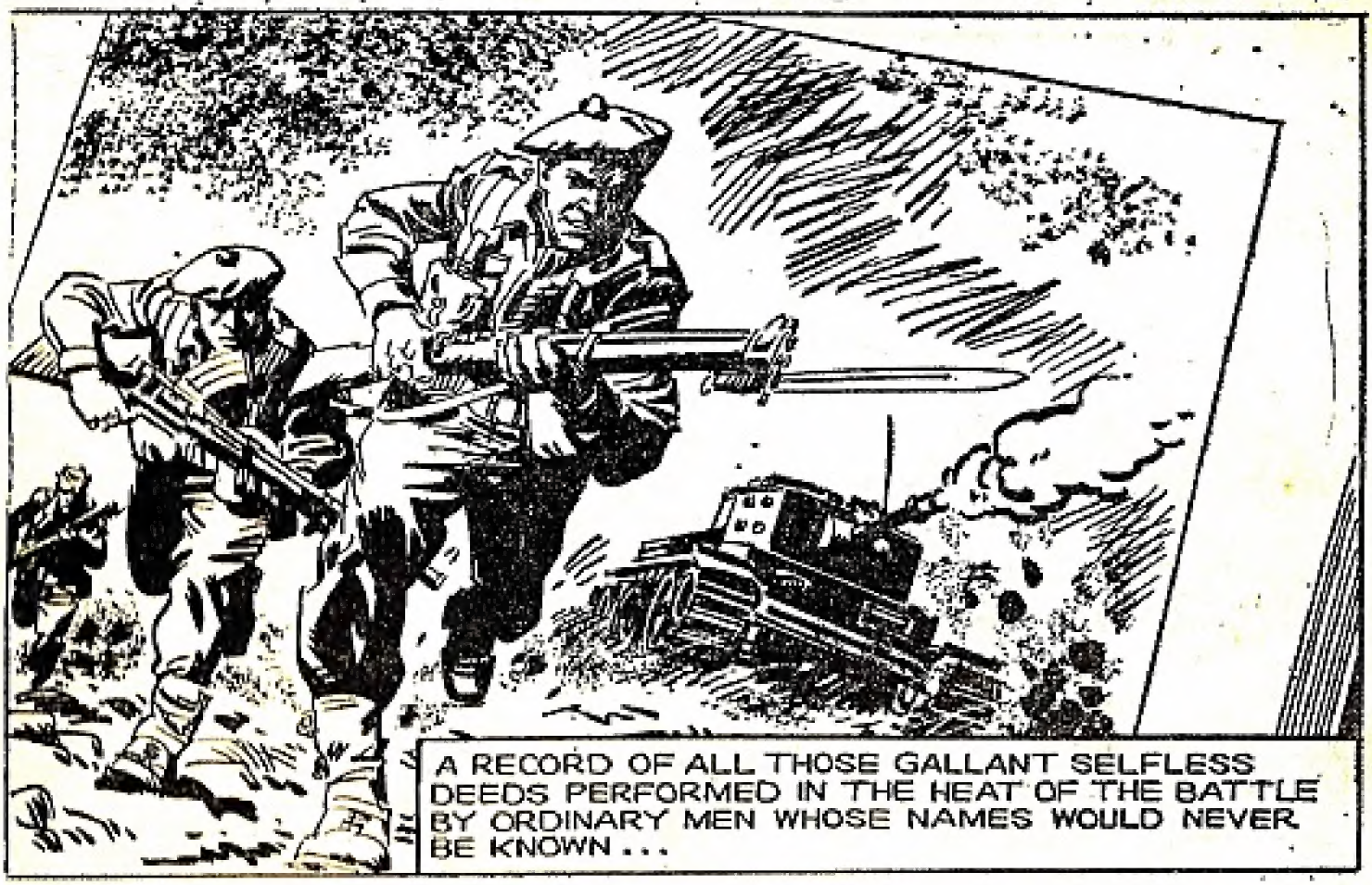

AFTER THREE MONTHS IN HOSPITAL, THE SOLDIER WHO HAD NEVER FIRED A SHOT IN ANGER, WAS DISCHARGED WITH A GRATEFUL COUNTRY'S THANKS AND A SMALL PENSION FOR THE LOSS OF HIS LEFT ARM.
BUT HE STILL HAD HIS RIGHT ARM AND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS LIFE, TREVELLYAN KNEW EXACTLY WHAT HE HAD TO DO.

SHUT AWAY AND FORGOTTEN BY THE WORLD, JOHN WORKED SLAVISHLY AT HIS TASK. SLOWLY, THE STACK OF COMPLETED CANVASES GREW, UNTIL AT LAST THE END WAS IN SIGHT.
OUR BEST CRAFTSMEN SHALL PRINT THESE, MISTER TREVELLYAN. THEY ARE MAGNIFICENT!

IT WAS AT A REUNION JUST AFTER V.E. DAY THAT JOHN WENT BACK TO THE REGIMENT.
THEY'RE GOING TO PRESENT A BOOK OR SOMETHING TO OLD WINCANDY.
IT'S A BOOK OF PAINTINGS BY A FELLOW CALLED TREVELLYAN. DONE A DASHED GOOD JOB OF IT, TOO! SOMEHOW, WHEN YOU SEE IT, YOU CAN UNDERSTAND WHAT MADE THOSE FELLOWS TICK THAT FOUGHT AT CARENTERNO. IT MUST HAVE BEEN HELL.

JOHN, PERHAPS YOU WERE NEVER OUR SMARTEST TROOPER, BUT YOU HAVE SERVED OUR REGIMENT FAITHFULLY. IN YOUR WORK OUR COMRADES WILL LIVE AGAIN.
THE HANDFUL OF SURVIVORS FROM THAT BLOOD-STAINED SICILIAN PLAIN WHO WERE THERE NODDED IN EARNEST AGREEMENT OF THE SIMPLE WORDS OF THE GREY-HAIRED COLONEL.

WITH HIS GRAPHIC PICTURES, TREVELLYAN HAD IMMORTALISED THE DEATH OF A REGIMENT, THE 4TH/7TH PRINCE CONSORTS OWN HUSSARS.
HE HAD CONCEIVED AN INDELIBLE RECORD OF THE MEN AND MACHINES THAT HAD GIVEN OF THEIR BEST AT A PLACE CALLED CARENTERNO.


A RECORD OF ALL THOSE GALLANT SELFLESS DEEDS PERFORMED IN THE HEAT OF THE BATTLE BY ORDINARY MEN WHOSE NAMES WOULD NEVER BE KNOWN . . .

. . .BECAUSE THEIR WITNESSES, TOO, HAD GONE TO DUST.
AVENGER

Printed in England by Messrs. Percy Brothers Ltd., Manchester 1, and published each month by Fleetway Publications Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Advertisement Offices: Tallis House, Tallis Street, London, E.C.4. Second class postage paid at New York Post Office, New York. Sole Agents: Australasia, Messrs. Gordon & Gotch Ltd. South Africa, Central News Agency Ltd. Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Messrs. Kingstons Ltd. WAR PICTURE LIBRARY is sold subject to the following conditions, that it shall not, without the written consent of the Publishers first given, be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of by way of Trade except at the full retail price as shown on the cover; and that it shall not be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of in a mutilated condition, or in any unauthorised cover by way of Trade; or affixed to or as part of any publication or advertising, literary or pictorial matter whatsoever. 8/2/64

ALSO ON SALE NOW

FOR WAR THRILLS . . . ACTION . . . DRAMA . . .

WAR PICTURE LIBRARY

No. 228—CRASH LANDING

What was the jinx that rode with the glider pilot right on to the drop-zone and into the battle beyond ?

No. 230—NO RETREAT

The war-weary Aussies thought they had found a haven of rest in the war-torn Pacific. Then the Japanese came . . .

ALSO ON SALE NOW :—

No. 231—A CAGE OF TIGERS

Next month's **FOUR** thrilling **WAR PICTURE LIBRARY** issues, on sale 2nd March, are :—

No. 232—MISSION—SURVIVAL
No. 233—UP IN ARMS
No. 234—TO STRIKE AGAIN
No. 235—GHOST PANZERS

GIANT STAMP COLLECTION

Fabulous bargain offer includes many superb sets of unusual stamps : **TOGO** Stamp Centenary set of 3 (Show rare old German Colonial stamps !) **MONGOLIA** Stupendous Rocket set of 2. **RUSSIA** scarce 1944 Allied Flags (Value 3/-). **ALBANIA** old imperforate set of 3. **GT. BRITAIN** 1936 Edward VIII set of 3 ; 1937 Coronation. **CHILE** mint airmail set of 3. **UPPER VOLTA**—diamond shape. **CAMEROONS** Telstar. Dozens of other fascinating stamps from all over the world. Grand total of 120 all different (worth 8/6 plus) all yours for only 1/- to introduce our bargain approvals. (Approvals are the most interesting and economical way to build a collection. Selections of stamps are sent to you for 10 days free inspection. Buy what you want, return the rest.)

SEND COUPON WITH 1/- TODAY. OR WRITE ASKING FOR LOT P. 30.

BROADWAY APPROVALS
50, DENMARK HILL, LONDON, S.E.5.

I ENCLOSE 1/-, RUSH ME 120 different stamps. Send a selection of Bargain Approvals for free examination.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

..... **Lot No. P. 30**

Please tell your parents you are answering this advertisement.